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# MARCH AGAINST RACISM

SATURDAY 17 MARCH, LONDON, GLASGOW AND CARDIFF >>Page 20

# Socialist Worker

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ON THE UCU union picket lines at King's College in London

PICTURE: GUY SMALLMAN

## AS UNI STRIKE SHOWS HOW TO FIGHT...

# WE NEED MORE OF THIS

**WORKERS ARE** holding a series of solid strikes at universities across Britain. They have won widespread support.

Workers at 15 further education colleges were also set to strike this week. And a number of school strikes are fighting academisation.



University strikes show what's possible if unions fight—and they have the bosses worried. As workers everywhere face attacks, more unions should call action that can beat the bosses and the Tories.

>>Pages 4&5 and 10&11

## BREXIT

### Europe divisions have our rulers in disarray

THE GOVERNMENT was in a panic over Europe this week as negotiations over Britain's departure from the European Union moved towards a crucial point.

But problems are not confined to the Tories as the Labour right pushed Jeremy Corbyn into support for a customs union with Europe.

>>Page 6

## ITALY

### Racists and crooks vie for votes

SOME 119 demonstrations took place in Italy last Saturday in the run-up to the country's election on Sunday.

In Rome tens of thousands of people marched to stand up to fascism. And in Milan thousands protested against a 20,000-strong rally of the right wing Northern League.

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## SPYING

### How cops and spooks wreck people's lives

INTELLIGENCE services are neither intelligent nor a service. But the spooks are a dangerous force used to subvert opposition to our rulers.

They are parts of a state system designed to keep capitalism in place.

>>Pages 14&15





## THE THINGS THEY SAY

**'Dear right wing people please stop the red scares. Please give the Cold War Lingo a rest.'**

Contrarian for money  
Brendan O'Neill in the  
Spectator on 20 February

**'The Corbynistas bared their teeth. They gave us an insight into the mob-like authoritarianism that lurks behind the facade of their politics'**

Brendan O'Neill in the  
Spectator on 23 February

**'Inefficiency is the norm'**

Management consultants make  
NHS hospitals less efficient,  
according to **Andrew Sturdy**,  
professor of management at  
Bristol University

**'It was like watching live television'**

One minister on the Tory  
cabinet Brexit away day

**'There was a magic'**

Another minister on the Tory  
cabinet Brexit away day

**'The plan is doomed'**

Another minister on what the  
Tories came up with



# Millions of workers cheated out of the minimum wage

**BRITAIN'S LOWEST** earners are being cheated out of the minimum wage, a new report has revealed.

Figures released last week show up to two million people, who should get at least £7.50 an hour, could be losing out.

Common causes of underpayment include failing to pay workers for travel between jobs and deducting money for uniforms.

Investigations by the HM Revenue and Customs discovered 98,150 workers were paid less than the entitlement in 2016/17.

But the statistics from the House of Commons Library also take into account unpaid time, which affects people who often work more than their contracted hours



Rushing to work for a pittance

without getting overtime.

According to the report, Minimum wage: cracks in the floor, once unpaid time is taken into account, between one and two million workers are likely to be being

underpaid.

The minimum wage currently stands at £7.50 an hour for workers aged 25 and over.

This will rise to £7.83 in April.

**REAL** household incomes over the past decade have grown at less than half the rate than official government figures claim.

New data shows households have suffered the worst growth in real wages in 50 years.

The research from the Economics Statistics Centre of Excellence and the Office for National Statistics shows that real household income grew by only 0.2 percent a year in the decade to 2015-16, rather than the 0.52 percent shown in official figures. The government's statistics for measuring living standards are skewed in favour of wealthier households.

**THE TORIES** accepted a £10,000 donation from a company run by property tycoon James Tuttiett. He made a fortune through owning the freehold of 40,000 homes and schools across Britain. He charges ground rent which gets more expensive every year. Housing secretary Sajid Javid called it "an unjustifiable way to print money". Last July Javid launched a consultation on leasehold proprietors. The donation came shortly afterwards.



James Tuttiett

**REALITY** television's Stanley Johnson reveals an "unfulfilled" ambition—"To do what I can to limit the growth of the world's population." Would it be rude to mention that, as a father of six, he's made a bit of a shaky start? Though if he feels the need to cut the number of Johnsons, who are we to stop him?

## Government organise gun and handcuff sale

THE HOME Office has invited various repressive regimes next month to browse stalls selling surveillance technology and crowd control equipment at a "security" trade fair it is running.

The "Security & Policing" event started out as a way for suppliers to show off their wares to the cops.

But since 2010 the government has invited "overseas government security-related delegates" to the fair.

This year it takes place on 6-8 March at Farnborough, promoting "legitimate defence



and security exports".

The Home Office organises the event with the defence industry trade body, ADS Group, and the UK government's

arms sales unit.

They invite and provides escorts for "security" delegations from more than 70 nations.

The current list of invitees is secret

As well as flogging sniper rifles, shotguns, batons and handcuffs, the exhibition promotes cyber-spying firms that have been accused of helping repressive governments.

## Peers find cheaper food hard to stomach

PEERS HAVE whined that the subsidised meals they get in the House of Lords are "truly horrible". One made an official complaint that the nosh is so bad it raises "health issues".

Another moaned he was served "uneatable" roast beef in the swanky Peers' Dining Room, where a gourmet two-course lunch can be had from the set menu for just £14.95.

He said of his meat, "It was grossly overcooked, and so tough it was almost impossible to cut with a knife."

The three main eateries in the Lords, where peers get £300



Lords' cafe

a day to show up, cost £1.2 million in subsidies last year.

The peer who moaned about his roast told how he was entertaining guests and faced the "huge embarrassment" of having to apologise to them.

Another peer moaned "The only virtue of these two dishes was that they were minute in scale."



## STREETING'S BLEATINGS

**Wes Streeting** is nominally a Labour MP. This is an occasional series on his wisdom

● Last week on the university strike Streeting Tweeted, "Support @ucu members in Ilford North and beyond who are on strike today over #USS changes—avoidable if employers engaged properly with staff."

● When brother Wesley was NUS president—and Labour was in government—he opined, "Students need industrial action by university staff like a hole in the head."

It's nice to see the left-ish turn of the Labour Party has affected even Streeting

## Duncan Smith shills for landlords

IAIN DUNCAN Smith is supplementing his MPs' salary again with money from the landlords industry.

In a new entry in the register of MPs' interests, IDS says he received £4,000 to speak at the National Landlord Investment show last November.

He says this took only four hours, so he was earning £1,000 an hour.

IDS also trousered £3,500 in November for "magazine articles" for the National Landlord Investment Association, and another £4,000 for speaking at its June 2017 show. Then there was £5,020 for speaking to the "Negotiator" conference at London's Park Lane Hilton in November—"the UK's premier event for estate and letting agents".

IDS argued for reducing taxes on private landlords, claiming it was time to "stop punishing" them.



Iain Duncan Smith

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# Crime victim says 'police damaged me the most'

A SERIES of recent scandals have exposed how police mistreat vulnerable people. One officer, Ihsan Ali, was jailed for two years earlier this month after pursuing sexual relationships with women in the north west of England.

A court heard that the fact that the women were victims of crime "is what he used to initiate and justify further communication with them".

The Independent Office for Police Conduct is investigating a Metropolitan Police officer after allegations that he sent inappropriate messages to a colleague.

And last month an officer in Hereford was sacked for gross misconduct after taking part in sexual activity with a vulnerable woman.

The cases are all too familiar to Hannah, a young woman who says she has suffered four years of harassment at the hands of the cops.

Hannah contacted police because she was a victim of crime. She suffered abusive relationships and was beaten up by her partner's relatives.

## Damaged

But she told Socialist Worker, "The people who I'm most scared of are the police. They have damaged me the most. Once I called the police because my ex-partner was contacting me. They came but they weren't taking it seriously so I asked them to leave."

"One officer twisted my hand around my back and I had to go to hospital. I was badly injured."

Hannah made a complaint. But the police response was to suggest a "local resolution". This would see Hannah meet the officer responsible and say how the assault made her feel—but nothing would be done.

"I thought that was disgraceful," said Hannah. "The way they treat victims and women especially—they're letting down so many people. And they're adding to their problems."



HANNAH CONTACTED police because she was the victim of crime

Hannah feels that challenging the cops has made her a target. On one occasion, she said a police unit was threatening to kick her door down if she didn't let them in.

"I was really freaking out," she said. "It was after they'd injured me. I thought they were going to kill me. I tried to slide down a drainpipe to get away and broke my leg. I blame them for it."

Hannah is on medication and has taken overdoses as a result of the stress. "I just wanted to end it all," she said. "They've made a victim distraught and if they've done it to me, they've done it to other people."

Once she woke up in hospital after overdosing to find two police officers there. "I was quite disorientated," she said.

"The next thing one officer went

out and the other tried to put my hand on his dick."

Hannah was desperate to get documents from the cops detailing her injuries. In her vulnerable state, she hoped the officer could help.

A different officer later seemed willing to help too. "He said if I needed to ask him any questions, to get in touch," she said. "I thought he really does care."

## Inappropriate

The officer began to message Hannah on Whatsapp and eventually sent inappropriate messages and pictures. When Hannah said she wasn't interested he didn't respond. "He didn't want to help me," she said.

None of the men accused have so far been held to account for any of Hannah's complaints. Hannah said police decided there was no further action to take against her ex-partner's relatives.

They failed to arrest her ex-partner after she made a complaint of rape earlier this year.

"He's done it before and he's recorded me on his phone," she said. "I told the police. But I found out they weren't arresting him but asking him to come in voluntarily."

"And they wouldn't say if they had seized his phone."

The experiences have had a devastating effect on Hannah's life. Pain in her hand and leg is a "constant reminder" of what has happened to her.

"There are women who have killed themselves because they've got no justice. They victimise victims and trivialise violence against women. But this is my life. It's not trivial."

## What's your story?

Email with your ideas  
reports@socialistworker.co.uk

## SALFORD

# Opposition pushes cuts back

A controversial consultation on closing all five council-run nurseries in Salford, Greater Manchester, has been postponed following public opposition.

Labour-run Salford council says it needs another £1.5 million to keep the nurseries running.

A consultation on the nursery closures was due to begin on 28 February.

Now a joint campaign between parents, trade unionists and Labour councillors will be launched instead.

But Salford mayor Paul Dennett said the consultation would only be



Under pressure: Salford's Labour mayor Paul Dennett

postponed for one month to give the campaign an opportunity to lobby the Tories.

There's no certainty about what happens after that.

Closure would mean a loss of over 100 nursery jobs. 350 children would need to find alternative childcare.

Parents and workers are organising to defend their nurseries, and have set up a campaign for each one.

They plan a demonstration in Salford. Local Labour MP Rebecca Long-Bailey has invited campaigners to lobby the Tories in parliament.

Salford Unison union treasurer Ameen Hadi said, "It's a big task taking on the government and we need to mobilise everyone behind this campaign."

"We're going to keep the campaign going until the consultation is not just postponed but withdrawn."

Salford council should call off the consultation, guarantee the nurseries' future, and demand the Tories pay up.

## Poverty for millions in Britain

WORKERS FACE serious rises in inequality unless trade unions start a real fightback.

A report from the Resolution Foundation last week warned that cuts to working-age benefits are damaging the future for 8 million low and middle-income households.

The rollout of £14 billion of welfare attacks far outweighs any gain from small increases in the minimum wage.

Torsten Bell, the think tank's director, said, "This parliament risks seeing the first sustained rise in income inequality since the 1980s."

Adam Corlett, a senior economic analyst at the foundation, said, "2017 was a disastrous year for

living standards, as inflation caused pay packets to shrink and made the cash freeze in working-age benefits bite harder.

British workers' living standards have fallen on average as prices rose faster than wages in the six years from 2008. After a brief respite in 2015 and 2016, falling real pay returned in 2017.

Local government workers in England and Wales are voting on whether to accept a below-inflation pay offer for the next two years. The ballot closes on 9 March. They should reject it and push for strikes.

Teachers in the EIS union in Scotland are calling for a 10 percent rise.

It's time for action on pay.

## STAND UP TO RACISM NATIONAL DEMONSTRATIONS

Saturday 17 March

standuptoracism.org.uk



- London - 12pm, Portland Place, W1A 1AA
- Glasgow - 11.30am Holland Street, G2
- Cardiff - 12.30pm, Grange Gardens CF11 7L



# Universities strike wave for pensions has bosses on back foot

by SADIE ROBINSON

**SOLID STRIKES** by UCU union members have panicked university bosses. Workers across 61 universities began a three-day strike on Monday.

It followed a successful two-day strike at 57 universities last week (see pages 10&11).

Edinburgh, Stirling, King's College and Queen Mary universities were the latest to join the walkouts.

After one day of strikes the Times newspaper ran a front page story reporting "chaos" in universities. By day two some 17 vice chancellors had publicly called for negotiations and the bosses' Universities UK (UUK) had called for talks.

Bosses want to shift workers' pension scheme from a defined benefit one to a defined contribution scheme. Yet they have ruled out negotiating on this issue.

Dundee striker Carlo is on the UCU's national executive committee. He told Socialist Worker, "People are pleased there are talks, but they don't trust the bosses. Some see it as quite a cynical move."

## Revisit

Bruce is president of the UCU at Newcastle university. "UUK isn't willing to revisit the decision to impose the changes," he told Socialist Worker.

"My suspicion is that they hoped we would suspend strikes for talks and then they can derail us and drag out the dispute. But UCU has the momentum."

It's good that the UCU kept the strikes on as talks take place. The strike on Wednesday will coincide with UCU's day of action against workplace racism.

As Cambridge striker Anne put it, "We should be careful not to get sucked down the route of thinking the strike is a tool to get 'everyone talking again'. UUK



Student solidarity

## BACK STORY

**Over 40,000 university workers are fighting for their pensions**

- They are currently on a defined benefit scheme
- This means they pay into it and know what they'll get out of it
- Bosses want to move to a defined contribution one
- This would see workers will pay into it, but not know what they'd receive
- It's part of a bigger Tory drive for universities to be run like businesses

hasn't budged from its position that caused the strike. So we shouldn't budge from ours.

"We aren't on strike just to reopen negotiations. We are on strike to win."

Bosses have used misleading valuations to wrongly claim that there is a deficit in the pension scheme.

Sean is vice president of the UCU at University College London and an NEC member. "We can only have meaningful talks when the deficit is off the table," he told Socialist Worker.

"I can't see anybody settling for any deal where defined contribution was a significant part."

He added, "The union is growing and we're getting support from students. We're on the up."

Workers plan a four-day strike from next Monday and then a five-day walkout ending on 16 March the following week.

The union's higher education committee (HEC) meets on Friday to discuss "phase 2" of the action.

Carlo said, "I'm putting a motion to the HEC to say that we should have another five days of action after 16 March.

"The momentum is building and the employers are in a very difficult position.

"The action has to stay on."



OUTSIDE THE Universities UK headquarters on Monday

PICTURE: GUY SMALLMAN

## 'Tremendous' mood on picket lines as more groups join action

**HUNDREDS OF** striking university workers and students held a noisy rally outside Universities UK (UUK) offices in central London on Monday.

Protesters chanted, "Say hey, say ho—UUK has got to go," and students let off flares.

One banner read, "Pensions not pornstars"—a reference to a vice chancellor's expense claim for a "pornstar martini" (see right).

A group of students at UCL began an occupation in support of the strike on Tuesday.

Alex, a striker at King's, told Socialist Worker, "The atmosphere on the picket lines was tremendous. In the past it's been easy for the employers to split students and staff. But now we've got lots of student support."

University College London (UCL) striker Sonia was one of many who said pensions was only one of the issues angering workers. "Universities are becoming corporations," she told Socialist Worker. "Education is



University College London pickets

becoming an asset, not a public good."

Thousands of people have joined the union to take part in the action.

The strikes have shown how hard-hitting, sustained action can inspire workers to get involved.

Several strikers said they felt the escalating strikes would have a bigger impact than 24-hour walkouts.

It shows that, if other unions called similar action, it could have a huge impact.

Many new strikers were picketing at UCL. One told Socialist Worker, "We have targets to meet to bring in money to the university, but where is that money going? It's going to vice chancellors.

NEU union member Wendy visited a "lively picket line" at the University of Hull to show solidarity.

She told Socialist Worker, "There were strikers and students on all gates on Monday's picket lines. New staff and student supporters are joining."

Mike is vice president of the UCU there.

He said workers would "stick it out" for all of the 14 planned strike days.

"Strikes are criticised for not making a difference but you only have to be on the picket line for five minutes to see the solidarity.

"It took only two days of strikes to bring employers to the table."

## Lavish expenses expose all the lies of the bosses

UNIVERSITY vice chancellors are claiming millions in expenses to swan around in fancy hotels and posh restaurants while workers face savage attacks on their pensions.

A Channel 4 Dispatches investigation found that vice chancellors (VCs) and other senior staff have claimed around £8 million in expenses over the last two years.

And 13 universities failed to respond to its Freedom of Information requests—so the real figure will be even higher.

The revelations come as workers in the UCU union are set to begin their second week of strikes on Monday in a fight to defend their pension scheme.

They make a mockery of bosses' claims that there's no money for pensions or workers' pay.

## Package

The expenses claimed include a payment of £1,600 by Surrey university to ship over a VC's dog from Australia. The payment was on top of a £15,000

resettlement package for the VC and his wife.

At Southampton, 17 top bosses claimed £400,000 over the two years. Sheffield University's VC, Sir Keith Burnett, claimed £3,107.54 for him and his wife to stay five nights at a five-star hotel in Singapore.

VCs have also claimed expenses to cover meals and drinks in Michelin-starred restaurants.

Among the other claims were £1,300 for a work of art and £110 for a Fortnum and Mason hamper. Some VCs claimed for Easter eggs and flowers. One claim covered a "pornstar martini". Interestingly,

universities don't seem to consider much of the spending to be "expenses".

It said, "We do not classify business expenditure incurred via a university purchasing card as 'expenses'." Dispatches found that Burnett spent over £91,000 on food, drink, flights and hotels.

The expenses are on top of massive salaries. And the vast majority are involved in setting their own salaries.

Fat cat bosses' drive to turn universities into businesses has caused massive anger among workers and students. It has fed into the strikes.



Striking for pay

Richard said, "Our vote shows that people are quite determined. And people are upbeat after seeing the photos and videos from the university strikes.

"The anger in colleges is fuelled by mergers. After mergers a lot of heads of departments have seen their salaries go from £50,000 to £70,000.

"The money is there to give us a pay rise."

The colleges that will be on strike are City and Islington, College of Haringey, Enfield and North East London, Westminster Kingsway, Croydon, Epping Forest, Havering, Lambeth, Richmond-upon-Thames, Sandwell, Sunderland, City of Westminster, College of North West London, Hackney, Redbridge and Tower Hamlets

**Socialist Worker**  
WHAT WE THINK

## RESIST TRUMP'S RACISM AND WARMONGERING

**P**RESIDENT Donald Trump's warmongering, racism and sexism seemingly know no bounds.

On Monday Trump claimed he would have run unarmed towards the gunman at the horrific Parkland school shooting. It follows his call for teachers to be armed (see page 15).

The real problem is that the US is at the centre of a world built on brutality and where violence is glorified.

Yet Trump's answer to the shootings is simply to have even more weapons available.

But his murderous ambitions go much further.

The New York Times newspaper reported last week that the White House claimed it had unlimited scope to expand its war in Syria.

Letters from the Pentagon and US State Department to Democratic senator Tim Kaine assert that the Trump administration can expand its war apparently indefinitely.

Kaine has been touting a new Authorisation for Use of Military Force (AUMF) as a way of maintaining and expanding

military intervention in Syria. He has argued that Congress must have the final say.

The White House claims that it does not need a new excuse for war, claiming that the AUMF against Al Qaeda for the 2001 invasion of Afghanistan is still in play.

US presidents can't technically declare war on their own—that's the job of Congress.

However, this congressional approval is seen as a rubber stamp—Barack Obama didn't bother getting congressional approval for his 2011 invasion of Libya, for instance.

Trump's glorification of war has reached new heights. Last

weekend he announced plans for a military parade on Veterans Day, 11 November.

Some estimates put the cost at over £21 million.

At a security conference in Munich last week, Republican senator Jim Risch said Trump was prepared to start a "very, very brief" war with North Korea.

It would be "one of the worst catastrophic events in the history of our civilization," said Risch.

And Trump is also stepping up his racism.

Inspired by Trump's rhetoric, Immigration and Customs Enforcement officers carried out nearly 144,000 arrests last year.

This week Trump was to visit California to view prototypes for his racist border wall with Mexico. It's a disgrace that Theresa May has invited Trump to Britain, and he says he will visit later this year.

The 17 March anti-racist demonstrations are the first chance for everyone who hates what Trump stands for to take to the streets in protest.

They can be a focal point for all those horrified at what his presidency has ushered in, and what it could still bring.

**The White House claimed it had unlimited scope to expand its war in Syria**

## THE SYSTEM RISKS LIVES

**T**HE NUMBER of street homeless people has risen for the seventh year in a row—as temperatures dropped below freezing.

Many of the 4,751 people sleeping rough in parks, streets and archways in Britain face life-threatening conditions.

It's a damning indictment of both the Tories—and our capitalist society—who treat working class people like trash.

As the Public Sector Build Journal said, "Rough sleepers are

seen as the human form of litter within a space."

The Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea—the richest borough in London—has 1,399 empty dwellings.

Yet as the bright young things of Chelsea wallow in wealth, the Tory-run council is waging war on homeless people.

Official figures show that it shipped some 1,688 people to outer London areas in 2016.

They could have been rehoused by taking empty homes off the rich.

Working class people who do have accommodation are often condemned to unsafe, overpriced housing. The burnt-out wreck of Grenfell Tower in the heart of Kensington is a reminder of what this can mean.

We need to build millions of council homes but we also need to get rid of the system that causes the housing crisis.

That means building a socialist society that meets people's needs, instead of maximising bosses' profits.

**SOCIALIST REVIEW**

## #TimesUp for unequal pay

Anna Blake and Sally Campbell on women fighting for equality at work

**Plus**

Robert Behan on Putin's regime and its discontents  
Brian Richardson on the persistence of institutional racism  
Naima Omar on the Bolsheviks, Islam and the women of the east

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## ANALYSIS

ALEX CALLINICOS



# Brexit talks show up tensions for Tories

**AS NEGOTIATIONS over Britain's departure from the European Union (EU) move towards a climax, the policy positions of the Tories and Labour register the balance of forces within each party. Last week the cabinet Brexit committee met at Chequers and agreed on what Theresa May would seek in the talks over Britain's future relationship with the EU.**

They adopted the principle of “managed regulatory divergence”. This would place Britain's trade with the EU after Brexit in three “buckets”.

In the first would be sectors—for example, cars, chemicals, and medicines—which are closely integrated into cross-European production chains. They would start off with the same rules as those governing the European Single Market.

In the second bucket, primarily service sectors and above all the City of London, trade would be based on “mutual recognition”. In other words, each side would accept each other's rules, and crucially these sectors would retain access to the single market.

Finally, Britain would go its own way in the third bucket, with new areas such as robotics and driverless cars.

This formula was designed to square the circle between the two factions in the cabinet.

There are those such as chancellor Philip Hammond who want to stick as close as possible to the single market. And there are the Brexiteers, led by Boris Johnson and Liam Fox, who want to break loose from the EU in the belief that Britain can then make great trade deals with the US and China.

But what works for the Tory party doesn't work for the rest of the world, and in particular for the EU-27, the member states that will remain after Brexit. Donald Tusk, president of the European Council, immediately attacked May's plan, saying it was “based on pure illusion”.

He was expressing the EU-27 position, repeatedly stated by its chief negotiator, Michel Barnier.

According to this Britain has two choices. It can stay in the Single Market, in which case it must accept regulations in which it has no part in making, be subject to the European Court of Justice, and continue to recognise the freedom of movement of EU citizens. These are all things that both May and the Brexiteers have set their faces against.

## Bespoke

Alternatively, Britain can make a free trade agreement with the EU. This would give its manufacturing industries access to the single market, but not the City and other services.

By trying to avoid either option, the Tories are seeking what May calls a “bespoke” agreement—Johnson's “having our cake and eating it”. But this is precisely what Brussels is determined not to let them have.

Why are the EU-27 taking this position? Two main reasons. First, because they can. The EU market is more important to British-based firms than the British market is to firms in the rest of the EU.

Secondly, because a more complex position will open up the differences on the EU-27 side.

The German government under Angela Merkel is backing Barnier. But German capitalism has invested heavily in the City and in the British car industry.

According to Charles Grant of the Centre for European Reform, other member states worry that a free trade agreement “could restrict trade with the UK too much”.

So the EU-27 have an interest in keeping their position simple and hard. Meanwhile, a pro-Remain minority of Tory MPs are pressing May to move closer to the EU-27 and stay in a customs union with the EU.

This is anathema to the Brexiteers because it would mean Britain couldn't make trade deals with third countries.

And now Jeremy Corbyn is backing a customs union and saying Britain should keep “a close relationship with the single market”. The Financial Times called this a “clever move” because it increases the pressure on May. But Corbyn is also bending to the demands of pro-Remain Labour MPs.

Financial Times columnist Wolfgang Münchau said that “the EU would impose tough rules on Britain” in a customs union. This could mean the neoliberal restrictions that staying in the Single Market would require, which is why Corbyn rightly rejected it in the past.

Sometimes boxing clever isn't so clever.

LABOUR LEADER Jeremy Corbyn's speech on Monday has emboldened Heidi Alexander MP (below)

# Corbyn's speech on Brexit will be used by the right wing

by NICK CLARK

**JEREMY CORBYN will come under increased pressure from right wing Labour politicians to back staying in the European single market following a speech on Monday.**

The single market enforces austerity and privatisation.

Corbyn announced Labour's support for staying in a custom's union with the EU, which allows free trade without tariffs between members.

His speech was welcomed by the bosses' CBI, the Institute of Directors and trade union leaders.

Corbyn said a Labour government would negotiate a “strong relationship” with the single market, but with “exemptions” from rules that would stop it ending austerity.

Some Corbyn supporters hailed this as a clever move to unite Leave and Remain supporters behind Labour.

## Collaborate

It sets up Labour MPs to collaborate with pro-EU Tories in parliament.

But right wing Labour politicians see it as a step towards backing single market membership—and eventually opposing Brexit itself.

Heidi Alexander MP said after Corbyn's speech, “Staying in the single market

is the next logical step.” And Chris Leslie MP tweeted, “Now let's win argument on #SingleMarket.”

More than 80 Labour politicians signed a statement published the day before Corbyn's speech, calling on him to drop his opposition to it.

It was coordinated by MPs who are leading members of Progress—a Labour faction closely associated with right wing former leader Tony Blair.

They support staying in the single market because they

agree with its free market, pro-privatisation rules.

Yet they seek to give the single market a left wing gloss to harness the support of Labour members opposed to austerity.

## Investment

The statement said, “If we want to fund our anti-austerity investment programme we can't afford the multibillion pound hit to the public finances that leaving the single market would entail.”

To back this up, the statement quoted TUC general secretary Frances O'Grady.

She warned that leaving the single market would be “bad for jobs, bad for investment and bad for business”.

Yet for well over a decade “good for business” has meant austerity and privatisation.

The rules of the EU and single market have been used to enforce anti-trade union laws and austerity.

Stopping austerity means higher taxes on the rich and the nationalisation of entire industries—things that single market rules prohibit.

Instead of edging ever closer to the big business position on Brexit and the EU, Labour should put forward an anti-austerity and anti-racist vision.

# Concession to racism

**CORBYN HIT out at scapegoating of migrants in his speech on Monday.**

He said, “It is not migrants that drive down wages, it is bad employers that cut pay and bad governments that allow workers to be divided and undermined”.

But he said freedom of movement would end after Brexit, suggesting that it would hold Labour back from “preventing employers being able to import cheap agency labour to undercut existing pay and conditions”.

**That's a dangerous concession to the idea that immigration is responsible for low pay.**

**There is no evidence that immigration lowers wages. But immigration controls such as work permits put migrants in a more precarious position—and more vulnerable to bosses who drive down pay.**



## More online

For more on the single market, see [bit.ly/2HMcV73](https://bit.ly/2HMcV73)

# Cladding safety test results may be 'doctored', leak reveals

Leaked documents from cladding manufacturer Kingspan UK show that fire test results could have been doctored. It raises serious questions after the Grenfell fire, writes **Alistair Farrow**

**RESULTS FOR** tests on potentially flammable building materials used across the construction industry may have been "doctored".

That's according to notes taken at an internal meeting of the Kingspan insulation manufacturer.

The notes from the meeting in September 2017—led by Kingspan UK's technical and marketing department head Adrian Pargeter—were leaked by a staff member to Inside Housing magazine.

They raise questions about the privatised Building Research Establishment (BRE), which carries out safety tests on behalf of manufacturers.

But BRE keeps the results secret, meaning manufacturers have to release the results themselves.

The tests examine a model wall's fire resistance—and are the only official way to approve materials for use on high rise blocks.

Now these leaked notes suggest reports from tests run by BRE have been doctored.

"You have to declare that you are happy for them [test results] to be made public... People have been doctoring the reports," the notes read.

Kingspan's phenolic insulation was used on Grenfell Tower. In a brochure entitled Routes to Compliance—Fire Safety it claimed that this was safe for use on high rises. The firm based this on a "desktop study" which meant it did not need to be tested.

## Cleared

Instead cladding and insulation systems can be cleared for use by referring to previous test data without being tested themselves.

Desktop systems have been in use since 2014.

That version of Kingspan's brochure was pulled following the Grenfell Tower fire.

The notes also raise questions about building regulations in Britain. The government announced last Friday that it would make changes to these to review the role of "desktop studies".

Yet these revelations come at the same time as government fire safety tests on cladding have been shown to be faulty.

One such test—a thermocouple test which measures



**FLAMMABLE CLADDING** attached to Grenfell Tower caused the fire to spread

PICTURES: GUY SMALLMAN

heat—was found to be inadequate, as it doesn't register temperatures above 600 degrees as a fail.

Following the Grenfell Tower fire the government tested seven different cladding systems. Four of these failed.

But two of them would still have passed a thermocouple test.

The entire building regulation and fire safety system in Britain needs an overhaul.

Decades of privatisation and deregulation led to the deaths in the Grenfell Tower fire. These attacks must be undone, but the Tories won't do it without a fight.

## BENEFITS

### Universal Credit linked to arrears

NEARLY THREE quarters of all tenants on the Universal Credit (UC) benefit in East Lothian, Scotland, are in rent arrears.

That's a "significant rise" since UC was introduced, according to a report released last week.

The figure compares to 30 percent of all tenants.

The average rent arrears owed by a UC claimant in East Lothian are £967.24.

The average rent arrears owed by tenants not claiming UC are £497.31.

A local Citizens Advice Bureau conducted a survey of clients in January 2017 to look at the impact



**A Dpac protest**

PICTURE SOCIALIST WORKER

of UC. East Lothian was the first place in Scotland where UC's "full digital service" was rolled out.

It said, "If all 134 respondents claimed Universal Credit rather than legacy benefits at the end of January 2017 there would be a net reduction of £2,923.55 per week paid out to claimants."

UC will eventually affect seven million households, including more than one million low-paid workers.

The Institute of Fiscal Studies think tank estimates that 2.1 million households face an average loss of £1,600 a year.

Ellen Clifford from Disabled People Against Cuts (Dpac) said disabled people are particularly hard hit by UC.

For instance, the benefits Enhanced Disability Premium and Severe Disability Premium don't exist under UC.

But many disabled people rely on such benefits to get by.

"The whole system of Universal Credit is a shambles," Ellen said. "It can't be fixed—it has to be scrapped."

## Make Tories pay for repairs

**RESIDENTS AT** two tower blocks in Hammersmith, west London, have been moved out after concerns were raised about fire safety.

People from 23 households have moved out of Hartopp Point and Lannoy Point since gaps were found in wall, ceiling and floor joints.

The council had been warned about fire safety concerns but ignored them, according to residents.

Earlier in February it was announced that cladding

similar to that used on Grenfell Tower will be removed from two Glasgow hospitals.

The cost of removing the cladding is £6 million and will be funded by the Scottish government.

The Tories can afford to pay for cladding to be removed, rather than leaving it to local authorities and leaseholders in privately-owned tower blocks to stump up the money.

It was the Tories that presided over deregulation—they should be made to pay.



**Anger after the fire**





# Crooks and racists vie for office in Italian poll

The failures of the Italian left have opened the door for right wing and racist forces, says **Simon Basketter**

**SOME 119 demonstrations took place in Italy last Saturday in the run up to the country's election on Sunday.**

In Rome tens of thousands of people marched to stand up to fascism. And in Milan thousands protested against a 20,000-strong rally of the right wing Northern League.

Billionaire crook Silvio Berlusconi's Forza Italia and his main ally, the Northern League's Matteo Salvini, have spent the campaign seeing who can promise to expel the most migrants.

Berlusconi is campaigning to form a coalition with the League and the Brothers of Italy, who have their roots in Mussolini's fascists.

He is bizarrely presenting himself as a moderate conservative who could tame the extremes.

He was convicted of tax fraud in 2013 and cannot stand for office.

In this campaign Berlusconi has said, "We have to prevent racism taking root by expelling, in a humane way, all the illegals and returning a sense of security to Italians".

## Shooting

Migration became the dominant theme in the election when a fascist went on a shooting spree in the central Italian town of Macerata, wounding six Africans.

He carried a candle with an image of Mussolini with him. Some 20,000 people came out to protest, but far right violence is on the rise.

When it emerged that the shooter was a former local election candidate of the League, Salvini blamed the incident on the rise in migration.

Attilio Fontana, the League's candidate for governor of the Lombardy region, called for the defence of the "white race".

Electoral collapse looks likely for the centre left Democratic Party, which has led a coalition government since 2013. It came to office because voters rejected austerity, but the party pursued cuts.

Matteo Renzi, the former Democratic Party prime minister, is seeking to get back in. He resigned

## BACK STORY

**Parliamentary elections were set to take place in Italy on Sunday of this week**

- The outgoing centre left Democratic Party government has been discredited
- It came into office off the back of anger against austerity but continued to make cuts
- This has opened space for the racist right
- There has also been some resistance with 119 demonstrations last weekend

in 2016 after voters rejected his pro-business changes to the constitution.

Caretaker prime minister Paolo Gentiloni spoke at the anti-racist protest in Rome last Saturday.

At the same time there was a protest by thousands of unemployed people, metal workers, youth groups and housing activists. It was against the government "reforms" that make it easier to lay off workers.

The Five Star movement may emerge as the largest single party in parliament but has said it won't go into coalition. It also has been using anti-migrant rhetoric. This party that says it is anti-corruption has had to expel 15 candidates either because they were corrupt or freemasons—or both.

For example it was discovered that a candidate in Lazio had appeared in a video with an organised crime boss and was paying only £6 a month to rent a council flat.

All of the parties except the League have toned down or reversed their anti-EU rhetoric during the campaign.

The failure of the centre left has opened up a space that will most likely be filled by some form of anti-migrant racism winning the election.



## On other pages...

Guns, mass killings and a society soaked in violence >>Page 15

DEMONSTRATING AGAINST racism in Italy last weekend

## UNITED STATES

# West Virginia teachers defy the law

by ALISTAIR FARROW

**AROUND 20,000 teachers and school workers in all 55 districts of the US state of West Virginia struck on Thursday and Friday of last week over pay and healthcare costs.**

Republican governor Jim Justice has signed off a below-inflation 2 percent pay increase starting in July, plus annual rises of 1 percent in the two following years.

On top of this school workers are faced with reduced employer contributions to private health insurance plans alongside rising

private healthcare costs.

Teachers in West Virginia are already among the worst paid in the country. "People were stopping to offer support, coffee, doughnuts, stuff all day long," said Ellen Shepherd, president of the Randolph County Education Association.

This week the strike was extended to Monday. They faced down the state senate president Mitch Carmichael who said, "I think it's an illegal walkout."

The state's laws say that public sector workers are barred from striking and that workers could face prison if they defy back to work orders.

A striking teacher

## FIGURE IT OUT

**78** billion euros was channelled to the Portuguese government as part of an EU and IMF bailout—with austerity conditions

**3.9** billion euros was spent bailing out private banks even after Portugal left the bailout

**9.5** percent is still the unemployment rate in Portugal

## PORTUGAL

# Postal workers fight job cuts

THOUSANDS OF Portuguese postal workers struck against plans to close post offices and axe jobs last Friday.

This follows two days of walkouts in December after management announced they wanted to sack 800 workers and shut 22 post offices

over the next three years. The CTT postal service was privatised in 2014 as part of a financial bailout from the European Union (EU) and International Monetary Fund.

The EU and bosses are putting pressure on the Labour-type Socialist Party government to abandon its attempts

to end austerity.

This has spurred resistance from groups of workers, including in the post and health service.

The strike was called by the four trade unions in the CTT. Workers demonstrated in Lisbon and unions say over 70 percent walked out.

## Children need our support

WE'RE FIGHTING for more funds for Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services (Camhs) and we hope those funds could be ringfenced (Socialist Worker, 21 February 2018).

And because so many children are dealing with this problem, we're fighting for early intervention and getting it into schools.

We didn't have early years intervention at all with my daughter Becky, who died last July.

Had things been dealt with at a younger age with her, I think things may not have escalated to where they did.

The first thing we faced was the waiting list.

Your child is in a situation and you're told to wait months.

And in that time those problems are getting bigger and are getting worse.

There also needs to be something in between early intervention and Camhs.

I also think of all the children that are turned away.

It doesn't mean that the child isn't ill or doesn't need help—and they'll probably end up in a situation where they do need Camhs.

The crisis team isn't available during evening or weekends. But during the day most kids are at school. Something's more likely to happen outside school hours.

They seem to find money for all sorts, especially for their own pockets, but there's no money for things we need like the NHS and homes.

Nicky Romero  
Bristol



## 'I was made to go through interrogation by the state'

THE GOVERNMENT has shifted the purpose of disability benefits.

Disability Living Allowance (DLA) was about helping people with disabilities maintain their quality of life. Now the Personal Independence Payment (Pip) assessments are designed to terrorise people.

I received the result of my Pip assessment last week—my benefits are to be cut.

I've got severe ME, chronic fatigue syndrome, and since the last assessment I've been diagnosed with PTSD.

My life is a complex patchwork of managing, trying to manage and not managing, getting help, not getting help, people coming round to help. It means struggling

with basics like cooking meals or getting to medical appointments. My social life has to fit around those difficult functions.

Prior to this decision I received the enhanced rates of £83.10 for the Pip daily living component and £55.65 for the mobility component. Now they only want to give me the basic rates—£80.

It means I will lose the mobility car that I rely on. And, because I can't cook or clean, I need help and spend more money on basics.

The interviewer was only looking for inconsistencies. I received the report that revealed the "errors" that I made.

It said I maintained eye contact with her, which indicates I don't have mental health issues. But

when I'm scared, when someone in position of power is asking questions, I will be absolutely glued, and on guard, however exhausted that will make me later.

To challenge the decision, you have to write a letter pointing out what's wrong with the 28-page long assessment. I have to go through it with added shock and fear. What's keeping me going is people telling me tips and advice, but what about others with less support?

Former Tory minister Iain Duncan Smith said he wanted to introduce the element of fear into benefits. It's state sponsored disability hate-crime. I went through a state interrogation.

Name provided  
South London

## Trump has the blood of 17 victims on his hands

WE ARE being presented with a familiar narrative to explain Nikolas Cruz's murder of 17 pupils at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida.

The focus is on Cruz's mental health not his far right sympathies.

His legal defence, for example, argues that Cruz is "deeply disturbed and emotionally broken".

And Donald Trump has been quick to seize on this

theme labelling Cruz as "mentally disturbed".

But Trump bears responsibility for the massacre.

He's made the intolerance that drove Cruz to carry out his crime part of the mainstream discourse.

By defending white supremacy Trump has the blood of the 17 dead on his hands.

Sasha Simic  
East London

## We can learn lessons from South Africa

IT WAS a really interesting interview with Ronnie Kasrils about the bitter disappointment of ANC rule since the fall of apartheid in South Africa (Socialist Worker, 28 February).

Ronnie remains enormously respected for the contribution he made to the South African struggle.

In 2005 Sinn Fein invited Ronnie to Northern Ireland to help convince its members to endorse the Police Service

Ronnie Kasrils

of Northern Ireland.

But in the last few years Ronnie has very publicly regretted the "Faustian pact" the ANC made with international

capitalism. They left the wealth of the big mining and farming firms untouched, despite their wealth coming from the oppression of apartheid.

And they followed the neoliberal recipe of privatisation and cuts.

On a vastly different scale, of course, but it's hard not to think of the parallels with what's happened in North Ireland over the last decades.

Colm Bryce  
South London

Just a thought...

## Don't chicken out of debate

WHAT AN utterly moronic article you wrote on KFC last week (Socialist Worker, 28 February).

The primary victims of exploitation here are the chickens, while you dribble on about distribution workers.

Dominic Davidson  
On Facebook

THE KFC story highlights the terrible plight of chickens (which are not a human commodity). Go vegan!  
Sarah London  
On Facebook

## Aid is not altruistic

YOUR ARTICLE on foreign aid is the same as we've always said (Socialist Worker, 28 February 2018).

They always say, "Guns for aid", "grow coffee get aid", "let us invest in railway lines to transport all your assets get aid" etc.

Aid is imperialist.  
Linda Jones  
On Facebook

EVERYONE should read Teresa Hayter's book *Aid as Imperialism* and Graham Hancock's *Lords of Poverty* to understand foreign aid.

David Seddon  
On Twitter

## Global attack on education

IN ARGENTINA we're going through a similar situation with privatisation in education (Socialist Worker, 28 February).

The government wants to install an education reform to make us youngsters go to work while we're still doing the last year of high school.

Everything that's planned is meant to increase profits.

@cutucuchillo  
On Twitter

## Brum Labour should fight

HERE WE go again—valuable day care centres for vulnerable adults being cut or closed (Socialist Worker, 28 February).

Birmingham's Labour-run councils should stop doing this to vulnerable people.

Melanie Powell  
On Twitter



# AS UNIVERSITY STRIKERS SPLIT THE EMPLOYERS AND WIN SUPPORT FROM STUDENTS...

## ‘WE’RE TAKING BACK OUR COLLEGES’

A wave of strikes by university workers over pensions has become a focus for people’s anger and discontent at the Tories’ and bosses’ attacks on education. A win for the strikers will be a boost to everyone who wants to fight back, reports **Sadie Robinson**

**A** MAGNIFICENT strike by university workers has shown how we can turn the tide against the bosses. Workers are fighting an attack on their pension scheme that’s part of a wider agenda to increase competition in higher education.

Striker after striker reported the largest ever picket lines on the first day of the action last Thursday.

Big groups of students joined picket lines, bringing placards, banners and collections for workers.

Up to 100 students walked out in solidarity with strikers at Imperial College London. A noisy student contingent led a march of around 650 people in Leeds. And at Goldsmiths college in south London, students led an impromptu march to Deptford town hall, where they laid siege to university management offices.

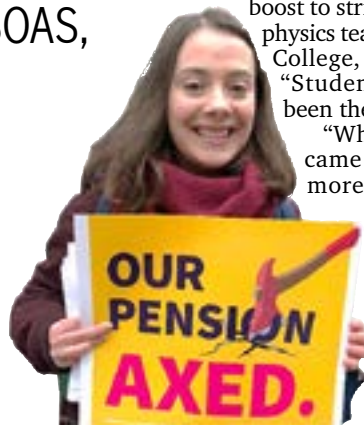
Lesley is campaigns secretary for the UCU at Leeds university. Like many strikers, she said this walkout felt very different to previous strikes. “Never before have we had students marching behind our banner,” she said.

Student Rebecca joined pickets in Glasgow to “make sure staff know they are respected”. She told Socialist Worker, “This is also about our future, both the kind of jobs available and the quality of education we get.”

University College London (UCL) student Daniel was one of many who brought homemade placards to show

‘If pensions get attacked then more lecturers might leave. And, if they can get away with attacking pensions, what’s to stop them doing other things such as raising tuition fees?’

**Ruby Student, SOAS, London**



support for the strike. “I don’t think that people who have committed their lives to benefiting others should have such a drastic cut in their pensions,” he said. “It’s shameful.”

Ruby, a student at Soas University of London, agreed. “If pensions get attacked, more lecturers might leave,” she said. “And if they can get away with attacking pensions, what’s to stop them doing other things such as raising fees?”

London striker Kate said the attack would make working in higher education less attractive. “I came here from Canada two years ago,” she said. “If this attack on pensions had happened then, it would have made me reconsider the decision to come here.

“It’s just making our futures unstable. We’re incredibly stressed.” The student support gave a huge boost to strikers. As Vijay Tymms, a physics teaching fellow at Imperial College, told Socialist Worker, “Students supporting us has been the critical thing for me.

“When the student union came out to support, I felt more able to tell students about why we were striking.”

UCU general secretary Sally Hunt said that the action shut down universities across Britain. Some 5,000 people had joined the union in the run-up to

the strikes to take part in the walkouts. Even more joined on the picket lines.

Roddy, a UCU rep at Imperial, said, “We’ve already had three people join on the picket line and they’re out with their picket armbands on.”

Union membership there is up by nearly 100 in just two months.

At UCL more than 100 people joined the UCU in the week running up to the first walkout. Administrator Rebecca joined the day before the strike began. “I started reading about what was going on with the pensions and got clued up,” she explained.

“A lot of people have stopped us to say they support us. I’m really happy to be here.”

Russell was on strike for the first time too. “It’s the sense of injustice that made me come out,” he said. “Universities like ours are making plenty of money from fees, but it’s not being invested in the people who work here or the students.

“Universities need to be given back to the people who work in them.” He wasn’t the only one motivated by anger at what bosses and the Tories are doing to higher education. As Glasgow university UCU president Jeanette said, “It’s not just that our pensions are being plundered. It’s also about the attack on publicly funded higher education.”

Bosses claim that workers’ USS pension scheme is in deficit. But that’s rubbish. And their valuation is

‘There’s no pensions deficit. The income more than pays for the outgoings. And they say they can’t afford it, but they’ve paid it when they’ve had less money in the past’

**Ruth Striker, UCL, London**



based on every university going bankrupt—a scenario that isn’t going to happen.

As striker Ruth said, “There is no deficit. The income more than pays for the outgoings. And they say they can’t afford it, but they’ve paid it when they’ve had less money in the past.”

**T**HE ATTACK on pensions comes as bosses fight to drive down conditions and pay across the sector. Striker Ioanna said it is “not unusual at all” to find university staff on casualised or zero hours contracts.

She’s worked as a researcher at UCL for seven years—but her contract is due to end in July. “My research department says there’s no more money to carry on,” she said.

“I’ve had so many different contracts—one-month contracts, three-month contracts. It’s a life of misery.”

Yet this dispute shows that, if a union gives a strong lead, it’s possible to launch a serious fightback. Hundreds of workers and students held strike rallies across Britain last Thursday.

Up to 600 rallied in Cambridge and 300 gathered in Cardiff and Manchester.

There were hundreds

more in Newcastle, Dundee and Sheffield, while union members in Glasgow and Strathclyde held a big joint rally. It also shows that the Tories’ anti-union laws don’t automatically stop action.

University workers now have to deliver a 50 percent turnout in ballots in order to have a legal strike. In a recent series of ballots more than 88 percent of UCU members backed strikes on a turnout of over 58 percent.

And calling hard-hitting action hasn’t put workers off. The union has called 14 days of escalating strikes. The 48-hour strike last week and the three-day walkout this week will be followed by a four-day and a five-day strike if bosses don’t budge.

Some union members said the “dramatic” programme of strikes made them feel more confident that bosses would have to take notice. They felt one-day strikes often made little impact.

John, UCU branch president at London’s Institute of Education, said the mood has been “really fantastic”. “It’s astonishing,” he told Socialist Worker. “The level of strikes we are embarking on is unprecedented in recent decades. It’s a sustained, national strike over 14 days.

“I was a bit concerned about how people would react. But all the questions have been about how we can make the strike work. No one has said we’re doing too much.”

**Pictures:**  
**Neil Terry, Ray Smith, Guy Smallman, Duncan Brown and Socialist Worker**



‘If this can be done to university pensions, what about everyone else’s? What about pensions for workers in the private sector?’

**Rachel Striker, Institute of Education, London**



secretary at UCL. “A number of new reps have gone off and organised solid picketing rotas from 8am until 4pm,” he said. “People are so outraged by the attack. I think management are going to get a shock.”

Carlo, a UCU rep in Dundee, said picketing had an impact. “Pickets stopped people and spoke to them—it wasn’t passive,” he said.

“Hardly anyone went in. People are determined to make their voices heard.”

Meanwhile in Newcastle, pickets turned away delivery vans and a postal worker.

The dispute matters for everyone. As London striker Rachel put it, “If this can be done to university pensions, what about everyone else’s? What about pensions for workers in the private sector?”

A victory for the bosses will make them—and the Tories—more confident to go on the offensive over other things. But if they are beaten it will show workers everywhere that it’s possible to fight and win.

**More on this story...**

More reports >> Pages 4&5



WHAT WE  
STAND FOR

**These are the core politics of the Socialist Workers Party.**

INDEPENDENT WORKING  
CLASS ACTION

Under capitalism workers' labour creates all profit. A socialist society can only be constructed when the working class seizes control of the means of production and democratically plans how they are used.

## REVOLUTION NOT REFORM

The present system cannot be patched up or reformed as the established Labour and trade union leaders say.

It has to be overthrown. Capitalism systematically degrades the natural world. Ending environmental crisis means creating a new society.

THERE IS NO  
PARLIAMENTARY ROAD

The structures of the present parliament, army, police and judiciary cannot be taken over and used by the working class. They grew up under capitalism and are designed to protect the ruling class against the workers.

The working class needs an entirely different kind of state—a workers' state based upon councils of workers' delegates and a workers' militia.

At most parliamentary activity can be used to make propaganda against the present system.

Only the mass action of the workers themselves can destroy the system.

## INTERNATIONALISM

The struggle for socialism is part of a worldwide struggle. We campaign for solidarity with workers in other countries.

We oppose everything which turns workers from one country against those from other countries.

We oppose racism and imperialism. We oppose all immigration controls.

We support the right of black people and other oppressed groups to organise their own defence. We support all genuine national liberation movements.

The experience of Russia demonstrates that a socialist revolution cannot survive in isolation in one country.

In Russia the result was state capitalism, not socialism. In Eastern Europe and China a similar system was later established by Stalinist parties.

We support the struggle of workers in these countries against both private and state capitalism.

We are for real social, economic and political equality of women. We are for an end to all forms of discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people.

We defend the right of believers to practise their religion without state interference.

## THE REVOLUTIONARY PARTY

To achieve socialism the most militant sections of the working class have to be organised into a revolutionary socialist party.

Such a party can only be built by activity in the mass organisations of the working class.

We have to prove in practice to other workers that reformist leaders and reformist ideas are opposed to their own interests. We have to build a rank and file movement within the unions.

To join us, turn to page 16 or go to [www.swp.org.uk](http://www.swp.org.uk) or phone 020 7840 5602 for more information

{ SOCIALIST WORKER }  
PUBLIC MEETINGS

## LIVERPOOL

**Politics of the Mind—Marxism and Mental Distress**

Wed 7 Mar, 7pm,  
Friends Meeting House,  
22 School Ln,  
L1 3BT  
Book launch with author  
Iain Ferguson

## MANCHESTER

**Politics of the Mind—Marxism and Mental Distress**

Wed 21 Mar, 7pm,  
Friends Meeting House,  
6 Mount St,  
M2 5NS

Book launch with author  
Iain Ferguson

## NORWICH

**Going beyond the binary—Marxism, gender and trans liberation**

Thu 8 Mar, 7.30pm,  
Vauxhall Centre,  
Johnson Place,  
NR2 2SA

## PORTSMOUTH

**Politics of the Mind—Marxism and Mental Distress**

Wed 7 Mar, 7.30pm,  
Somerstown  
Community Centre,  
River's St, PO5 4EZ

{ SOCIALIST WORKER }  
BRANCH MEETINGS

Weekly meetings to discuss political issues and our local interventions. All welcome.

## ABERDEEN

**The revolutionary ideas of Karl Marx**

Wed 7 Mar, 6pm,  
Belmont Cinema Cafe,  
49 Belmont St,  
AB10 1JS

## BIRMINGHAM: CITY CENTRE

**The rise of the far right in Europe—how can we fight it?**

Wed 7 Mar, 7pm,  
Birmingham LGBT Centre,  
38/40 Holloway Circus,  
B1 1EQ

## BRADFORD

**Is there a new women's movement?**

Thu 8 Mar, 7pm,  
Glyde House,  
Little Horton Lane (opposite the ice rink), BD5 0BQ

## BRISTOL

**US politics and gun control**

Wed 7 Mar, 7.30pm,  
YHA, 14 Narrow Quay,  
BS1 4QA

## BURNLEY AND PENDLE

**The Tories' Brexit crisis**

Wed 7 Mar, 7.30pm,  
Red Triangle Cafe,  
160 St James's St,  
BB11 1NR

## CARDIFF

**May '68—workers and students in struggle**

Wed 7 Mar, 7.30pm,  
Cathays Community Centre,  
Cathays Terrace,  
CF24 4HX

## BARNSELEY

Thu 8 Mar, 7pm,  
YMCA,  
Blucher St,  
S70 1AP

## BOLTON

Wed 7 Mar, 7pm,  
Bolton Socialist Club,  
16 Wood St (off  
Bradshawgate),  
BL1 1DY

## CHESTERFIELD

Thu 8 Mar, 7.30pm,  
Chesterfield Library,  
New Beetwell St,  
S40 1QN

## COLCHESTER

**Abortion Wars—the Fight for Reproductive Rights**

Thu 29 Mar, 7.30pm,  
Oyster Room,  
Hythe Community Centre,  
CO1 2FG  
Book launch with  
author Judith Orr

## COVENTRY

**The Russian revolution and the British working class**

Wed 7 Mar, 7.30pm,  
The Golden Cross,  
8 Hay Ln, CV1 5RF

## DUNDEE

**Why we need a revolutionary party**

Wed 7 Mar, 7.30pm,  
Dundee Voluntary Action,  
10 Constitution Rd, DD1 1LL

## EXETER

**Going beyond the binary—Marxism, gender and trans liberation**

Sat 3 Mar, 2pm,  
Exeter Community Centre,  
17 St. Davids Hill, EX4 3RG

## GLASGOW

**Sexism and the system—the fight for women's liberation**

Thu 8 Mar, 7pm,  
Scottish Youth Theatre,  
105 Brunswick Street, G1 1TF

## EDINBURGH

Wed 7 Mar, 7.30pm,  
Friends Meeting House,  
7 Victoria St,  
EH1 2JL

## HARLOW

Thu 8 Mar, 7.30pm,  
Friends Meeting House,  
1 Church Leys,  
Harlow,  
CM18 6BX

## LEEDS: CITY CENTRE

Thu 8 Mar, 7pm,  
The Swarthmore  
Education Centre,  
2-7 Woodhouse Square,  
LS3 1AD

## HUDDERSFIELD

**Marx, money and bitcoin**

Wed 7 Mar, 6.30pm,  
Brian Jackson House,  
2 New North Parade, HD1 5JP

## HULL

**Catalonia, independence and resistance**

Thu 22 Mar, 7pm,  
Cafe licious,  
104 Cottingham Rd, HU6 7RZ

## LONDON: BRENT AND HARROW

**A rebel's guide to Rosa Luxemburg**

Thu 8 Mar, 7.30pm,  
The Pepperpot Centre,  
1a Thorpe Close, W10 5XL

## LONDON: EALING

**How can Trump be stopped?**

Thu 8 Mar, 7.30pm,  
Y Lounge, YMCA West London,  
25 St Mary's Rd, W5 2RE

## LONDON: HACKNEY

**After the Oxfam scandal—are NGOs enemies or allies?**

Thu 8 Mar, 7.30pm,  
The Round Chapel,  
2 Powerscroft Rd, E5 0PU

## LONDON: HARINGEY

**Sexism and the system—the fight for women's liberation**

Wed 7 Mar, 7.30pm,  
St John Vianney Church Hall,  
386 West Green Rd, N15 3QH

## SOCIALIST WORKER PUBLIC MEETINGS

International Women's Day public meetings...  
How did women win the vote?

## LONDON: NEWHAM

Wed 7 Mar, 7pm,  
Stratford Advice Arcade,  
107-109 The Grove (next to  
Morrisons car park), E15 1HP

LONDON: TOWER  
HAMLETS

Wed 7 Mar, 7pm,  
St Margarets House,  
21 Old Ford Road,  
Bethnal Green, E2 9PL

## MEDWAY

Thu 8 Mar, 7.30pm,  
Nucleus Arts Centre  
(Conference Room),  
272 High St,  
ME4 4BP

## LONDON: LEWISHAM

**Immigration—the myths spread to divide us**

Wed 7 Mar, 7.30pm,  
West Greenwich Community  
and Arts Centre,  
141 Greenwich High Rd  
(near Greenwich main  
line and DLR station),  
SE10 8JA

## LONDON: WALTHAM FOREST

**Women and the Black Panthers**

Wed 7 Mar, 7.30pm,  
William Morris  
Community Centre,  
6-8 Greenleaf Rd,  
Walthamstow,  
E17 6QQ

## MANCHESTER: CENTRAL

**The real tradition of international women's day**

Wed 7 Mar, 7pm,  
Friends Meeting House,  
6 Mount St,  
M2 5NS

## NOTTINGHAM

**After the Oxfam scandal—are NGOs enemies or allies?**

Wed 7 Mar, 7.30pm,  
International  
Community Centre,  
61b Mansfield Rd,  
NG1 3FN

## NEWCASTLE

Thu 8 Mar, 7pm,  
Commercial Union House,  
39 Pilgrim St,  
NE1 6QE

SHEFFIELD: CITY  
CENTRE

Thu 8 Mar, 7pm,  
Central United  
Reformed Church,  
60 Norfolk St (near  
Crucible Theatre), S1 2JB

## TELFORD

Wed 14 Mar, 7.30pm,  
Carriages,  
The Parade,  
Wellington, TF1 1PY

## OXFORD

**Sexism and the system—the fight for women's liberation**

Wed 7 Mar, 7.30pm,  
Restore, Manzil Way (off  
Cowley Rd),  
OX4 1YH

## SOUTHAMPTON

**Italy and the rise of the far right**

Wed 7 Mar, 7.30pm,  
Central Baptist Church Hall,  
Devonshire Rd,  
SO15 2GY

## SWANSEA

**Class struggle and women's liberation**

Thu 8 Mar, 7.30pm,  
Brynmill Community Centre,  
St Albans Rd,  
SA20BP

WOLVERHAMPTON  
AND WALSALL

**Marx, money and bitcoin**

Wed 7 Mar, 7.30pm,  
Wild Bytes Cafe,  
Darlington St,  
WV1 4HW

## YORK

**Marx, money and bitcoin**

Wed 7 Mar, 7.30pm,  
Sea Horse Hotel,  
4 Fawcett St,  
YO10 4A

{ STAND UP TO  
RACISM }

## BIRMINGHAM

**Birmingham stands up to racism**

Thurs 1 Mar, 7pm,  
The Priory Rooms,  
40 Bull St,  
B4 6AF

## MANCHESTER

**Manchester stands up to racism**

Thurs 1 Mar, 7pm, Friends  
Meeting House,  
6 Mount Street,  
M2 5NS

## LONDON: HACKNEY

**Hackney stands up to racism**

Mon 12 Mar, 7.30pm,  
Halkevi Community  
Centre 33 Dalston Lane,  
E8 2PE

## LONDON: HARINGEY

**Haringey stands up to racism**

Sat 3 Mar, 4pm, Wightman  
Road Mosque,  
389 Wightman Road, N8 0NA

## LONDON: ISLINGTON

**Islington stands up to racism**

Mon 5 Mar, 7pm,  
Finsbury Park Mosque,  
N4 2QH

## LONDON: NEWHAM

**Newham stands up to racism**

Frid 2 Mar, 7pm, St  
John's Church,  
Broadway, Stratford,  
E15 1NG

## LONDON: SOUTH

**South London stands up to racism**

Wed 7 Mar, 6.45pm,  
Karibu Centre,  
7 Gresham Rd,  
SW9 7PH

## LONDON: SOUTH EAST

**Refugees welcome, No to racism and Islamophobia—film showing and panel**

Tue 6 Mar, 7pm,  
Deptford Lounge,  
9 Giffin St, SE8 4RH

## NATIONAL

**March Against Racism—UN Anti-Racism Day**

Sat 17 Mar, London 12 noon,  
Portland Place, W1A 1AA.

**Glasgow** 11.30am Holland  
Street, G2 **Cardiff** 12.30pm,  
Grange Gardens CF11 7LJ.

Go to [standuptoracism.org.uk](http://standuptoracism.org.uk)

## NEWCASTLE

**Newcastle stands up to racism**

Sat 10 Mar, 1pm  
Newcastle Arts Centre,  
Black Swan Yard,  
67 Westgate Road,  
NE1 1SG

## OXFORD

**Confronting the rise in racism rally**

Thu 1 Mar, 7pm,  
Oxford Town Hall,  
St Aldate's,  
OX1 1BX

## SHEFFIELD

**Sheffield stands up to racism**

Wed 7 Mar, 7pm, Central  
United Reformed Church,  
60 Norfolk St,  
S1 2JB

{ MOVEMENT  
EVENTS }

## DORSET SOCIALISTS

**HDV—gentrification and corrupt councils**

Sat 3 Mar, 1.30pm,  
Colliton Club,  
Colliton Park,  
DT1 1XJ

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# Art that shows how another world can be made possible

A collection from dozens of artists range from the inspiring to the baffling. **Richard Rose** explains how it seeks to look beyond the walls of the gallery

**“THERE'S NO alternative” is a phrase socialists often hear.**

This exhibition helps us to imagine how things might be different.

The images included are designed to reassert the potential of art as a poetic, social and political force in the world.

Inspired by a letter by artist Naum Gabo, *Actions* reflects the energising diversity and breadth of art in the modern and contemporary period.

Some 38 artists make up this exhibition using diverse media—paint, mural, film, vinyl, books, music, speech, illuminations and more.

They've created work ranging from the inspiring to the baffling.

## Powerful

Particularly powerful are works dealing with anti-racism.

The ripped pages of Issam Kourbaj's “Cancelled” Syrian passport were especially moving.

Another highlight is Basel Abbas and Ruanne Abou-Rahme's short film about young Palestinians exploring an abandoned village in an Israeli-occupied area.

I felt proud to see pieces both featuring and by Cambridge Stand Up To Racism activists on display.

I found Zoran Popovic's strongly anti-capitalist film *Struggle* in New York 1976 interesting because it seemed to combine the tensions within the show as a whole.

It featured footage of a picket line outside The Whitney Museum of Contemporary Art alongside a raucous musical performance.

Alongside it were some intensely theoretical pronouncements about the link between art and society, both of which I found very obscure. Does



STREET ARTIST El Seed's work in Cambridge

PICTURE: RICHARD ROSE

change come from cultural or from economic struggle, it seems to ask. Perhaps it is a bit of both?

There were other powerful images of protest as an agent of change.

I'd have loved to have seen more of these, more images of the masses as a means of making the world

different. I really liked the way that artist el Seed's *Perception* mural spilled out of the galleries and onto the streets of Cambridge.

His beautiful work featured on the walls of the shopping centre of the working class community where I live.

And any exhibition that seeks to look beyond the walls of the gallery to show that there really is an alternative, should definitely be applauded.

*Actions*. The image of the world can be different.

Kettle's Yard, Castle Street, Cambridge, CB3 0AQ Until 6 May. Free

## Contradictions run through exploration of rural life

### EXHIBITION

#### THE LAND WE LIVE IN—THE LAND WE LEFT BEHIND

Hauser and Wirth, Durslade Farm, Dropping Lane, Bruton, Somerset BA10 0NL Until 7 May. Free

MUCH OF the media have been reporting the ill-effects of highly processed food, so this exhibition is very timely.

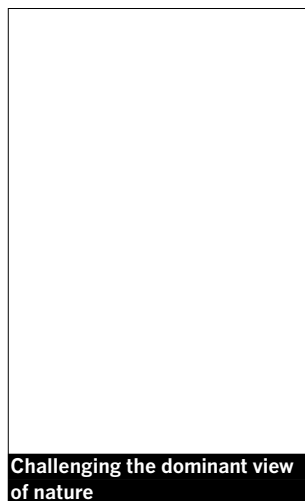
The title comes from an old agricultural workers' drinking toast, celebrating where they were and remembering where they had come from. The

exhibition has three main threads.

The first element celebrates the rural past in its complexity and contradictions.

One display cabinet contains both an entrance ticket to a Luddite event and also William Nicholson's class-snobbish riddled image of the “yokel”.

Another has a manifesto statement from the New Diggers next to a small display of *Woman's Own* magazine alongside medals for cookery and craft.



Challenging the dominant view of nature

One room juxtaposes a video installation of contemporary technological farming methods, against 16th century portraits consisting of fruit and vegetables. The final thread explores ways of thinking about, depicting, producing and consuming food.

The contradictions embedded in the relationships between people and land emerge in the room containing works challenging the dominant view of nature as a source of simple exploitation.

It contains a 1950s poster telling us that “farmers like Shell” and its production of petro-chemical based fertilisers.

This is an exhibition well worth seeing for the ways in which it explores the relationships within rural life over time.

It's particularly important to look at how our attitudes to food have changed over time. And, in a world of climate chaos and shrinking natural resources, they need to change again.

**Richard Bradbury**

### RADIO

#### BRITISH SOCIALISM: THE GRAND TOUR

BBC Radio 4  
1.45pm weekdays and available on iPlayer

ANN MCELVOY presents this history of British socialism.

In the first episode she takes a look at the life of 18th century socialist Robert Owen.

Future episodes will feature socialist feminism, the Fabian society, and Tony Benn. At 15 minutes long, these are ideal for a lunch break listen.

Anne McElvoy

### FESTIVAL

#### WOW—WOMEN OF THE WORLD

7-11 March. Various prices  
Southbank Centre, Belvedere Road, London, SE1 8XX.

NOW IN its 8th year, the WOW festival is an eclectic mix of events from “speed mentoring” to drag king performances.

It also brings together activists at the forefront of Black Lives Matter and #MeToo campaigns.

Tickets for sessions can be pricey, but some talks are free.

### What's on at...

#### BOOKMARKS

the socialist bookshop

Booklaunch—Politics of the Mind: Marxism and Mental Distress with author Iain Ferguson

6:30pm  
Monday  
5 March

POLITICS OF THE MIND  
MARXISM AND MENTAL DISTRESS

1 Bloomsbury Street,  
London WC1B 3QE  
020 7637 1848  
bookmarksbookshop.co.uk



**S**INCE PEOPLE first stood up to their rulers, spies have been hired to listen in and disrupt opposition.

But as capitalism developed—and with it the working class—the state had to shift its methods of control. That is the explanation for the intent to subvert Jeremy Corbyn’s Labour Party with badly executed smears.

In capitalist power structures the elected government is at best only a temporary part.

Another part is permanent government. This includes the upper echelons of the Home Office, Foreign Office and Ministry of Defence, the City of London, and the Bank of England—all loyally followed by the media.

These are the relatively open parts of the power structure. Their influence is sometimes acknowledged—if usually underestimated.

The covert side consists of the intelligence community. This loose term covers spies and some journalists, academics and the like who are a mechanism of maintaining class rule.

The intelligence services are neither intelligent nor a service. They are incompetent, useless, poisonous and dangerous and are mostly there to protect business.

The British spooks’ charter specifically empowers it to do whatever is necessary to ensure the commercial well-being of Britain.

As Sir Percy Cradock, former chairman of the Joint Intelligence Committee, put it, “We are a trading nation. We are therefore profoundly interested in international stability. “We need to know where the water is going to be stormy.”

In the harsh world of international business competition, every country is a potential enemy. An FBI report identified 57 countries that were running economic and commercial espionage operations against the US.

The US state department rated at least half of those as “friendly”. For its part, the CIA provides the relevant US departments with French and British negotiating positions before international meetings.

Former British spies have recounted being given shopping lists of commercial information to get.

The British Joint Intelligence Committee sends the Bank of England a weekly assessment of the world

**“Whether any intelligence actually does much good is doubtful**

**Sir Percy Cradock was out to defend “trading interests”**

economic and trading situation. It all has a shabby history. Right wing adventurers and cranks make up the history of spooks.

In Britain they were usually posh enough to be called eccentric. What was important was that they serve the state.

The man who took over the major intelligence role in Germany for the West after the Second World War worked for the CIA, MI6 and West Germany. Reinhard Gehlen, a fervent antisemite, had been military intelligence chief of Hitler’s armies in the East.

And the man who gave away most of the secrets of Britain’s Government Communications HQ (GCHQ) in the Cold War was found out only because he was a child abuser.

He wasn’t found out by the intelligence service he worked for, but “positively vetted” six times.

### Incompetent

James Angleton, chief spy for the CIA for most of the Cold War, was ruthless and incompetent.

He drank constantly which added to his severe mental distress. He ruined hundreds of thousands of lives, usually of people on his own side.

He was blunt about his role in what he called the “wilderness of mirrors”. He explained, “It is inconceivable that a secret intelligence arm of the government has to comply with all the overt orders of that government.”

And that was true in Britain too. British spies repeatedly tried to smear the Labour government of Harold Wilson in far more serious ways than they do against Jeremy Corbyn.

At least one serious coup plot involved Cecil King, who had a meeting in May 1968 with Lord Mountbatten.

It broke up when one of those attending, a Lord Zuckerman, stormed out saying, “This is rank treachery. All this talk of machine-guns at street corners is appalling.” And this is how they operate against those at the top of society.

The Marxist historian EP Thompson wrote about one of those who printed the



GCHQ in Cheltenham

A SCENE from John le Carre’s *Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Spy*

# A LEGACY OF SPIES’ LIES

Intelligence services are neither intelligent nor a service, argues **Simon Basketter**. But the spooks are a dangerous force used to subvert opposition to our rulers

smears the spooks produce.

He described the journalist Chapman Pincher in words that fit much of the profession today.

For Thompson, Pincher was “a kind of official urinal in which, side by side, high officials of MI5 and MI6, sea lords, permanent under-secretaries, Lord George-Brown, chiefs of the air staff, nuclear scientists, Lord Wigg and others, stand patiently leaking in the public interest. One can only admire their resolute attention to these distasteful duties.”

One legacy, as if they have watched too many James Bond movies, is a belief in technology to accumulate information.

So just after the invasion

of Iraq in 2003, looters were ransacking Baghdad. US intelligence agencies monitoring phone calls across the city kept hearing the name “Ali Baba”.

The investigation to hunt him down was long underway before they realised that this was a common Iraqi phrase to describe all thieves.

The NSA in the US and its junior partner, Britain’s GCHQ, swap each other’s dirty work.

So GCHQ eavesdrops on calls made by US citizens and the NSA monitors calls made by British citizens, thus allowing each government plausibly to deny it has tapped its own citizens’ calls.

Karl Marx described the capitalist class as a band of “hostile brothers”. Corporations and states share information. States

then share information with each other. At the same time these corporations and states spy on each other.

### Opposition

The competition at the heart of the system makes gaining an advantage through the accumulation of knowledge paramount. It also means that any opposition to the corporations or states will be spied on as well.

Phillip Knightley wrote a history of spies—The Second Oldest Profession. He said, “They failed to predict the Czech Revolution, the Soviet invasion of Hungary, the end of the Cold War. But they also have lots of systems to cover up their failures.

“When they fail to predict something they say, ‘We did warn you but you failed to take

notice.’ Or they ask for ever yet more resources.”

He wrote, “All the intelligence services need a monster of some sort. When the Cold War ended it looked like the monster had gone.

“Just when it looked like we had rumbled them, they perpetrated on us probably the greatest political confidence trick of the century—they were saved by this new monster of terrorism.”

Former spy and writer James Rusbridger wrote, “Whether any intelligence does much good or actually enhances a country’s security is doubtful.

“No one dares ask whether any of it is worthwhile or could be done far more cheaply. The king must not been seen without his clothes.”

Peter Francis said he was ordered by cops to spy on the family of Stephen Lawrence

## Cops rob people’s lives and bodies

**T**HE “SPECIAL demonstration squad” was set up by Special Branch cops after anti-Vietnam war demonstrations in 1968. Its motto was, “By any means necessary.”

It bugged, burgled and bribed its way into unions and campaigns.

Later police spied on murdered teenager Stephen Lawrence’s family as they tried to dig “dirt” to “smear” them. And they formed sexual relationships with activists from various campaigns to get information.

Theresa May announced that Judge Christopher Pitchford would head an inquiry into undercover policing.

He died before he had a chance to cover anything up and was so replaced by Sir John Mitting. Mitting has brought a new vigour to the task, repeatedly ruling that the names of various cops mustn’t be revealed in order to protect their privacy.

Each of the approximately 170 officers had a code number and a false name. So the police plants in the International Socialists, forerunners of the Socialist Workers Party—HN301 and HN343—were known

as “Bob Stubbs” and “John Clinton”.

Take the case of Officer HN297, who operated undercover in the Special Demonstration Squad between 1974 and 1976 and has since died. He went undercover in the Troops Out Movement, which campaigned against the British Army’s role in Northern Ireland, and a separate revolutionary socialist group called Big Flame.

HN297 used the fake identity Rick Gibson. Mitting ruled that revealing Gibson’s real name would also interfere with his widow’s privacy.

Gibson had two intimate relationships with women he spied on. One, known as “Mary”, has demanded Gibson’s real name.

The inquiry has committed to revealing the cover name used by HN81—the officer sent into the Lawrence campaign—but it is not minded to say anything at all about his boss, currently codenamed HN58.

It has been going almost three years. It is going to be at least another year before the victims of those abuses of power will hear any of the evidence.

What is certain is that the inquiry will not bring justice.

### READ MORE

● **The Second Oldest Profession** by Phillip Knightley £17.99  
● **Bugging and spies** Socialist Worker article [bit.ly/2onekFT](http://bit.ly/2onekFT)

Available at Bookmarks, the socialist bookshop. Phone 020 7637 1848 or go to [bookmarksbookshop.co.uk](http://bookmarksbookshop.co.uk)



### COMMENT

## Guns, mass killings and a society soaked in violence

The horrific Parkland school shooting has raised questions about gun laws—and wider US society, writes **Alistair Farrow**

SCHOOL shootings have reached fearsome levels in the US.

So far this year 63 people have been killed or injured in school shootings, according to the Education Week magazine.

Most recently 17 people were killed at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida.

The attack by Nazi sympathiser Nikolas Cruz, has led to powerful protests by young people, renewed pressure on president Donald Trump, and debates about who gets to own guns.

One of the worst responses came from Trump, who called for teachers to be armed as a preventative measure.

Soon after it emerged that an armed guard had been on campus but had failed to challenge Cruz.

### Killings

Children being killed in schools is obscene and a product of a sick society.

And in general this type of mass killings is becoming more frequent.

Those involving more than four deaths take place every 16 days in the US, ten times more frequently than in 1982-2011.

Killings by racist, anti-working class police are also disgustingly common.

Around 150 people have been killed by police in the US so far this year.

One gun control law that would make an instant difference would be to take all the guns off the cops.

Gun control played its role in building the racist foundations of the US state. Following the 1861-5 Civil War, gun control laws in the southern states were used to maintain the former slaveholders’ rule after emancipation.

Black people found to be in possession of weapons were often executed on the spot.



STUDENTS PROTEST in Minneapolis

PICTURE: FIBONACCI BLUE

### BACK STORY

- Mass killings, involving more than four deaths, happen every 16 days in the US on average
- This is ten times more frequently than 30 years ago
- Students plan protests at school killings on 14 and 22 March and 20 April
- Donald Trump has called for teachers to be armed

The revolutionary socialist tradition isn’t about pacifism. The ruling class fights relentlessly to hold on to its wealth and power.

But such arguments shouldn’t be repeated like dogmas. Arguing for the right to bear arms—guaranteed by the state—is different from arguing for workers’ control or for workers being armed to challenge the state.

Students who survived the shootings have begun a movement that can feed into the existing one challenging Trump’s presidency.

A fight is going on for which direction that movement takes—does it fold into the Democratic Party or maintain political independence?

As Marjory Stoneman Douglas survivors continue to demand change, the limits of relying on the Democrats will become clear. But changes in the law won’t change the direction society is moving in—a social movement can.

Marjory Stoneman Douglas survivors have publicly laid into high profile Republican politicians for their links to the National Rifle Association (NRA).

For example, NRA groups have spent nearly £5 million on behalf of North Carolina senator Richard Burr during his career.

Such influence feeds into a US society that produces regular school shootings and since 2000 has seen 270,000 murders and 650,000 suicides.

That society won’t be cured by gun laws.

**“The US lies at the centre of a system built on state brutality and death**



# School strikes get a result in Newham

by MIRIAM SCHARF

**NEWHAM COUNCIL** in east London has passed a motion opposing academies, following a series of strikes by school workers.

It read, "This council resolves to call on all governing bodies who are considering academisation to halt all steps towards academisation until and unless there has been a binding parental and staff ballot."

The motion added that if parents and workers vote no to academy status, this "must be accepted and implemented".

And the council "strongly discourages" academisation and said schools should stay in local authority control.

## Victory

It's a huge victory for striking NEU union members and parents who have been fighting plans to turn schools into academies.

Around 130 people joined a protest in Newham against academisation on Monday evening.

And workers at three



ON STRIKE at Keir Hardie school

PICTURE: MIRIAM SCHARF

schools struck together last Thursday—Avenue primary, Cumberland secondary and Keir Hardie primary.

Strikers say plans to turn their schools into academies put children's education at risk.

They even had a message of solidarity from Labour Party leader Jeremy Corbyn.

It said, "Our schools should be accountable to parents, staff and the whole community—and with Labour's National Education Service, they will be".

This was a heartening message.

But with a fast rolling programme of academisation locally, union members

and the community know they can't afford to wait for a Labour government.

With Avenue on their seventh strike day, Cumberland on their third, and Keir Hardie taking their first day, there is determination to stop academies across the borough.

Strikers are confident that

where there is a ballot, they can convince parents and staff to keep schools with the local authority.

At an 80-strong strike rally Newham NEU secretary Louise led with the resolute message, "Unity is the way to win."

Avenue parent Shebbida spoke of their legal case

against unfair consultation. "We are fighting for our school and community," she said.

Reps from all three schools spoke, showing the work that went into organising the strike.

## Blinks

Outer London Executive member Dominic Byrne promised that the union would back members striking against academisation "all the way, until the other side blinks".

Strikers keep organising to spread the fight to other schools in the firing line.

Seeing the strikes in Newham has helped other schools to resist.

Parents and workers from all schools, and everyone who wants to fight academisation and outsourcing should join us.

Workers began a two-day strike at The Village School in Brent, west London on Tuesday. The NEU union members are taking action against a move to make the school an academy. Governors were set to meet on Wednesday this week to decide whether the academy scheme would go ahead.

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# Crisis in Syria is a result of imperialist ambition

The Syrian regime's horrific bombing in Ghouta is the legacy of a failed revolution and a struggle for power over the Middle East, argues Nick Clark

**ON THE outskirts of Syrian capital Damascus, thousands of people wait to die beneath the bombs. They're the latest victims of a tangled regional power struggle fought amid the carnage of a bloody counter-revolution.**

Syrian and Russian airstrikes are hammering Ghouta, one of the last rebel enclaves—where 400,000 people are trapped.

Meanwhile in the Kurdish-held north of the country, national liberation fighters play dangerous power games. The US-backed Kurdish YPG now side with the Syrian regime to fight Western ally Turkey.

And in the south two of the Middle East's biggest military powers, Israel and Iran, edge closer to war.

It's a horrifying mess that has grown from the defeat of the Syrian revolution—when Syrian dictator Bashar al-Assad crushed the revolutionary movement that began in 2011.

Millions of people fled Assad's attacks, while those that stayed could only struggle to survive. Assad had made it impossible to organise the mass demonstrations that marked the beginning of the revolution.

Armed groups that at first defended the demonstrations became the focus of resistance—together they were known as the Free Syrian Army (FSA).

Sectarian tensions, deliberately stoked by the regime, fuelled rivalry and competition between them.

Meanwhile rival regional powers muscled in, all vying for influence over the Syrian society that would emerge from the counter-revolution.

FSA groups began to depend on funding from rich Gulf states—particularly Saudi Arabia. But armed

Islamists, also backed by various Gulf states, sidelined the FSA.

Saudi Arabia's biggest rival, Iran, intervened on the side of Assad.

Major global powers intervened to tighten their grip on the Middle East.

Russia joined the campaign against the rebels, hoping to prop up Assad and tie a future regime to itself.

Meanwhile the US intervened to shore up its influence in the region and in an effort to push Isis back. The sectarian group had taken control of large parts of Syria's north which had been abandoned by the regime.

Britain backed the US, and strengthened its allies' influence in Syria.

## Confrontation

Thanks to the US and Russia, most of Syria is now in the hands of the Kurds in the north, or the regime and its allies to their south.

But now the rival powers are coming into more direct confrontation with each other.

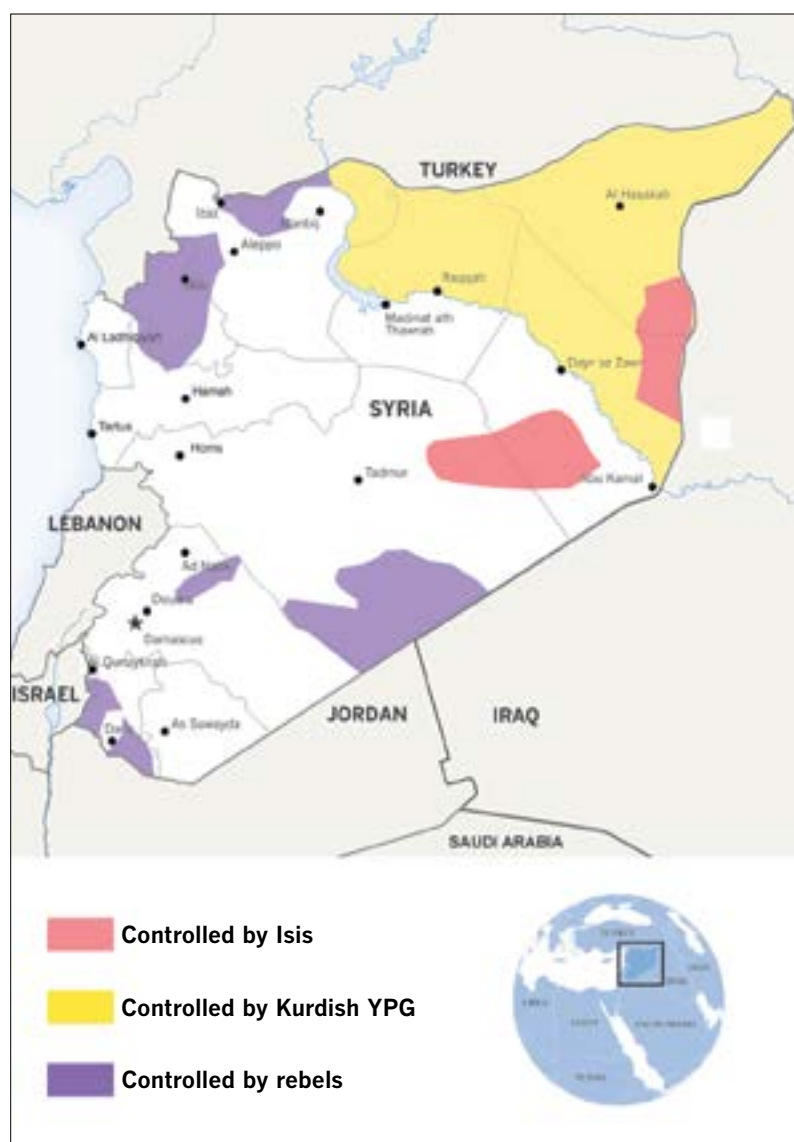
The Syrian civil war could give way to a war between major regional powers. It's a terrifying prospect, and there's no easy solution.

But in the revolutionary movement after 2011, Syrians showed their fates don't have to be left to warring regional powers that care nothing about them.

Ordinary people can challenge the lot of them and take control of their own lives. A return of revolution across the Middle East is the only way out of the nightmare.

## On other pages...

The history of British spies  
>>Pages 14&15



WAR AND counter-revolution have fractured Syria

**ONLY** small pockets of Syria are now controlled by rebels.

Most of these groups have little connection with the armed brigades that rose up in defence of the revolution in 2011.

These were made up of defecting regime soldiers and ordinary civilians to defend their towns and neighbourhoods from regime attacks.

But as the revolution descended into civil war, and foreign powers intervened with arms and funding, they were replaced by better equipped militias and Islamist groups.

Today "rebel" can refer to anything from the Southern Front—a British-backed group that controls a small pocket of land in Syria's south east—to the Islamist Jabhat al-Nusra.

As many as five different rebel groups are reported to be resisting the regime's assault on Ghouta.

**SYRIAN** dictator Bashar al-Assad is responsible for most of the bloodshed in Syria after the revolution in 2011.

Bashar took over as Syrian dictator after his father president Hafez al-Assad died in 2000.

Assad drove through a series of economic reforms that opened up Syria's economy to the market and privatisation, while cutting subsidies and welfare.

A handful of elites connected to the Syrian state grew wealthy.

Meanwhile most Syrians became poorer. Revolutions in Tunisia and Egypt inspired the Syrian uprising.

Seeing the fall of Tunisian and Egyptian dictators Ben Ali and Hosni Mubarak, Assad crushed the revolution with brute force.

## Kurds fight against Turkey

**THE KURDS** of northern Syria are an oppressed minority. Syrian Kurds have been denied citizenship rights and other basic freedoms for decades.

Armed Kurdish group the YPG began to carve out a Kurdish statelet after the regime withdrew from northern Syria.

The YPG militia are the main group in the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), the US-backed coalition that controls most of northern Syria.

Turkey has waged its own war against the Kurds.

And their growth has worried president Recep Tayyip Erdogan who fears

northern Syria will become a base for Kurdish fighters in Turkey.

Turkey invaded the Afrin area of northern Syria to fight the Kurds in January, causing tension with its Nato ally the US.

Now the SDF has made a deal with the Syrian regime to jointly defend the area against the Turkish invasion.

Any major clash between Syria and Turkey would almost certainly see the Kurds crushed.

They can't win freedom by allowing themselves to be used in regional power struggles.

## Iran is a key player in Syria

IRANIAN FORCES, along with groups backed by Iran, help the Assad regime to control much of Syria's southern border.

Joining the war in 2013 helped Iran to grow its power across the Middle East.

Reports say Iran now has permanent military bases inside Syria as a result of the war.

Its forces also control parts in northern Iraq, after intervening in the war there in 2014.

Iran hopes to build its economic strength against its rival Saudi Arabia.

Iranian investment in the Iraqi economy has made it a powerful economic force there.

Iran hopes to become a key part of the Syrian economy after the war.

But its expansion has brought it right to the border of its long-time enemy Israel.

Iran has funded Palestinian resistance group Hamas, and Hizbollah which defended Lebanon from Israeli invasion in 2006.

Recently Israel has threatened war on Hizbollah, and even on Iran itself.

Waving a piece of what he claimed was a downed Iranian drone, warmongering Israeli president Binyamin Netanyahu threatened Iran recently, "Do not test Israel's resolve."



## IN BRIEF

**Cement workers are set for pay rise**

CEMENT DRIVERS have called off strikes after bosses improved their pay offer.

Some 240 Unite union members at eight Castle Cement depots were due to walk out on Tuesday and Wednesday. But they've voted to accept a deal of a 3.7 percent increase this year and at least a 3.4 percent increase for 2019.

**Sticky end coming for Tarmac bosses?**

UNITE UNION members who make concrete breeze blocks are stepping up a fight against low pay.

Bosses at Tarmac Building Products want to introduce a low starter pay, which would mean a two-tier workforce.

Workers have already taken three days of action and plan to walk out for four more days in March.

**Remember Elephant housing meeting**

CAMPAIGNERS fighting against the redevelopment of the Elephant and Castle shopping centre have called a public meeting on 5 March.

The campaign has fought Southwark council to a standstill over plans which would have seen just 33 "affordable" homes out of a total of almost 1,000.

Now activists are on the front foot, developer Delancey has discovered it could build more affordable units.

● 6pm, Monday 5 March, Newington Tenants and Residents Hall, SE17 3AD

**Bromley action against outsourcing**

BROMLEY COUNCIL in south east London is being rocked by outsourced workers voting for strikes.

Library workers, employed by contractor Greenwich Leisure Limited, returned a 100 percent vote for strikes on an 87 percent turnout.

They are in dispute over staffing, pay and time off for union duties.

And Bromley care workers, outsourced to Certitude Support, voted 70 percent for action over pay, health and safety and union recognition.

**Guards plan strikes over safety on rail**

GUARDS ON Northern and Merseyrail train lines are preparing to strike over safety this Saturday.

It's the latest action against the implementation of driver only operation (Doo) trains.

And Southern Rail workers plan to walk out on 12 March.

In January six networks across Britain struck together to take on the bosses' plans for Doo. There needs to be a return to that level of action if Doo is to be defeated.

## ANTI-FRACKING



PROTESTERS GATHERED in Bolsover

PICTURES: SARAH BRYAN

# Fracking revolt grows stronger in Derbyshire

by JAMES EADEN

HUNDREDS OF people marched on a noisy and colourful Not for Shale anti-fracking protest through the North Derbyshire countryside last Saturday.

The march went from the village of Clowne to Bolsover.

It was a further impressive demonstration of the deep roots the anti-fracking movement has in our communities.

Campaigners have been buoyed by recent victories.

Local MP Dennis Skinner spoke at the rally in Hornschoft Park in Bolsover.

And he received loud applause when he highlighted Labour's pledge to ban fracking completely when in government.



A clear message

Skinner told Socialist Worker, "It's an amazing turnout.

"People have come from as far afield as Scarborough, where they are fighting a similar battle against the same enemy. If I were in charge of

Ineos, I'd be worried about that.

"People have come here to speak with one voice, and not just as individuals, but as a collective."

Fracking company Ineos is now taking the National Trust to court because the Trust quite rightly refused Ineos' attempt to carry out seismic testing in Clumber Park.

This is a much loved area of natural beauty on the northern fringes of Sherwood Forest.

There needs to be continuing and growing protest and campaigning against the frackers.

There are big protests planned for June when the National Planning Inspectorate opens its public inquiry into Ineos' attempt to frack at Marsh Lane.

## DEATHS IN CUSTODY

## 'Police spied on bereaved sister' of Christopher Alder

A HEARING into the surveillance of Christopher Alder's family during a 2000 inquest into his death began on Monday.

Christopher died on the floor of Queen's Gardens police station in Hull on 1 April 1998. The 2000 inquest returned a verdict of unlawful killing.

During the inquest Christopher's family was placed under surveillance which exceeded authorised terms of surveillance.

Christopher's sister Janet and her legal

representative were followed away from the court and attempts were made to listen to conversations.

Deborah Coles of the Inquest campaign group said, "It is reprehensible that police spied on a bereaved sister and her lawyer during an inquest."

The hearing will examine whether this conduct was serious enough to constitute gross misconduct.

● Remembering Christopher Alder march, Saturday 31 March, 1pm, Victoria Square, Hull HU1 3DX

## DUNCAN TOMLIN

THE CROWN Prosecution Service announced last week its decision not to bring criminal charges against any police officers involved in events surrounding Duncan Tomlin's death.

Duncan died after police restrained him in July 2014.

The Independent Office for Police Conduct, formerly the IPCC, said four cops will face disciplinary action in relation to his death.

## SEAN RIGG

THE INDEPENDENT Office for Police Conduct has said five cops should face gross misconduct charges over the death of Sean Rigg in 2008.

The news came as PC Andrew Birks, one of the five, and now a Church of England minister, attempted for the second time to overturn a block on his resignation.

If he is allowed to resign he will avoid gross misconduct proceedings.

## TEACHERS

## Walthamstow teachers walk out for higher pay

WORKERS AT Connaught School for Girls in east London held a lively walkout over pay on Tuesday.

THE NEU union members are demanding they are paid an inner London allowance as an outer London school.

It's the first time a school in an outer London area has been balloted over the issue.

Paul Phillips is a NEU rep at the school. He told Socialist Worker, "It's been great. The picket line was big.

"We had parents there, teachers from other schools, local anti-racists. The local minister from the church came.

"Most importantly we had

around 15 or so strikers on the picket line."

Paul said workers have had messages of support from across Britain and from as far away as Malaysia.

He said, "The mood here is confident and vibrant. People are really proud to be standing up.

"We know that when we fight over pay, it's really about more investment in children's education."

Other schools in Waltham Forest are already paying the inner London allowance.

Workers plan five more strikes in March.

**Sadie Robinson**

● Send messages of support to pablophillips2007@yahoo.co.uk

## OBITUARIES

**Ben Drake 1970-2018**

SOCIALISTS AND Unison union activists were greatly saddened to hear that our comrade and colleague Ben Drake passed away recently.

Ben was a stalwart of his union branch which he chaired for many years, fighting long and hard over issues such as the "single status" national pay deal.

Ben helped many individuals, representing them in disciplinary matters, assisting with grievances and sorting out ill health retirement.

He also became an outstanding expert on the local government pension scheme.

At regional Unison meetings he always spoke

persuasively in support of other branches, most notably the Kirklees social workers.

For many years he sold Socialist Worker in the York council offices.

And we know from conversations with workers that Ben gave them the confidence to resist the cuts.

Ben also played a leading role in Unite Against Fascism in York.

Ben often wrote incisive letters to Socialist Worker and Socialist Review and was a party member to the end. Throughout his life, his practice was guided by socialist theory.

Our recent conversations with Ben remained incredibly engaging and his scope and depth of knowledge simply outstanding.

We should not have to lose someone so young but having

done so we must be inspired by his life.

All our condolences and thoughts go to Jane, his wife and great friend, and all who knew him.

**York SWP**

**Matt Sprenger 1954-2018**

LONG-TIME Socialist Workers Party member Matt Sprenger died in January.

Matt had suffered ill health for several years.

He was angry about those things that everyone should be angry about—war, racism, poverty, and inequality.

Matt was seriously good company and will be missed by his son Francis, his family and all who knew him.

**Dermot Smyth, Sheffield SWP**

## HOUSING

## Protesters square up to right wing Labour council

HUNDREDS OF people protested against the redevelopment of the town square in Walthamstow, north east London, last Saturday.

It is being pushed through by the Labour-run council and carried out by firm Capital & Regional.

Campaigners warn that the majority of the 500 new flats will be unaffordable for ordinary people.

■ THE FIGHT over plans for the site of the former Holloway Women's prison in north London continues.

Activists have called a public meeting with speakers including Jeremy Corbyn.

They want the site turned over to social housing and women's services.

● Public meeting, Fri 2 March, 7pm, St George's Church, Crayford Road, N7 0ND



NHS

# Hundreds march to save stroke service

by STEVE WILKINS

**AROUND 300 people marched through Thanet, Kent, last Saturday to defend the area's only stroke unit in Margate.**

The march was called by Save Our NHS in Kent, which is an umbrella group for health campaigns across Kent and Medway.

A spokesperson for the campaign said, "The last time people came out in such numbers was when the accident and emergency department of Margate hospital was under threat.

"We saved the A&E then, now we're going to do all we can to save the stroke unit."

## Hyper

The attack is part of bosses' plans to reduce the number of hospitals providing stroke services in Kent from seven to just three hyper acute stroke units.

A public consultation is taking place to decide in which hospitals the Hasus would be located.

But Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother Hospital (QEOM) in Margate and Kent and Canterbury Hospital have been excluded from all five options. This would mean that people in Thanet and Canterbury would have to



MARCHING IN Thanet against cuts to stroke services

PICTURE: STEVE WILKINS

travel to the William Harvey Hospital in Ashford.

Campaigners lobbied Thanet District Council earlier last week. And they are planning interventions at consultation meetings to demand the retention of stroke services at QEOM and three hospitals in East Kent.

■ **THE HANDS** Off Huddersfield Royal Infirmary (HRI) campaign was set to take its message to London on Wednesday this week.

a delegation planned to meet with Labour Party leader Jeremy Corbyn and other health campaigners fighting cuts.

■ **PROTESTERS** gathered in Bolton, Greater Manchester, last Saturday to protest against NHS cuts.

It brought together trade unionists, Labour and Green Party members, and NHS workers, as well as Labour Party MP for Bolton South East Yasmin Qureshi.

POSTAL WORKERS

## Vote to reject Royal Mail deal, strikes can win more

REPS FROM the postal workers' CWU union began meeting for regional briefings last week to discuss a deal to end a national dispute.

Union leaders want the Royal Mail workers to vote to accept the deal in a ballot set to run from 12 to 28 March.

The agreement would end a national dispute that looked as if it would lead to a national strike last year.

It contains several big concessions made by management—a testament to the union's organisation and workers' clear readiness to strike.

Yet it would also leave thousands of workers with a worse pension scheme and a real terms pay cut.

And the proposed

new pension scheme can't be brought in until the government passes legislation—something there's no guarantee that it will do.

## Inferior

Until then workers will be left on two inferior schemes.

The deal also involves trials of new working practices that could open the door to new attacks on conditions.

CWU members should vote to reject the deal.

Thousands of university workers are striking to defend their pensions and the Tories are in crisis.

A strike by Royal Mail workers at the same time could win even bigger concessions.

IT WORKERS

## Fujitsu workers plan more action to take on bosses

FUJITSU workers confronted bosses at their Manchester offices last Friday.

The Unite union members at the IT firm are fighting against compulsory redundancies, the victimisation of union reps and breaches of redundancies agreements.

Over 50 people demonstrated outside a meeting of Fujitsu senior management. Ian Allinson, a dismissed union rep at

Fujitsu, described the action as "uplifting". "It was great to see so much support on a day we weren't on strike," he said.

"It's given us a huge boost, and is a game changer."

Workers have walked out for 16 days in the last five weeks.

They are planning to announce more strike days soon alongside a wider campaign of action.

PAY CAMPAIGNS

## PCS union should fight like university strikers

CIVIL SERVICE workers in the PCS union were set to take part in "payday activities" on Wednesday of this week.

They are calling for a pay rise of 5 percent, a £10 an hour minimum wage, pay equality and a restructure of pay and grading structure.

The day of action comes almost a year since PCS launched its campaign against the 1 percent public sector pay cap.

The campaign has included several pay day protests and a consultative ballot that saw more than 79 percent vote for action on a 49 percent turnout.

Strikes by tens of thousands of university and FE workers this week have generated a feeling that it's possible to fight over pay and pensions.

PCS should join the fight with a real strike ballot to lead the fight over pay.

■ **THE PCS** union is calling on members in the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) to protest against compulsory redundancies forced on two workers in Plymouth.

Two workers at Plymouth Benefit Centre were handed compulsory redundancy notices earlier this month.

The PCS is calling on its members to send "e-letters" to DWP boss Peter Schofield.

## Risk

The union rightly warned, "If the DWP can get away with making these two staff compulsorily redundant then the risk becomes much greater that they will try and use compulsory redundancy again in the future."

That's why this is a fight for every civil service worker. A DWP-wide strike could save their jobs.

● Send an e-letter at [bit.ly/2EX7bIK](http://bit.ly/2EX7bIK)

TUSC

## Derby socialist jailed for 15 months in TUSC case

IN A decision that will anger many on the left, socialist Chris Fernandez has been sentenced to 15 months imprisonment for charges of electoral fraud.

He was the election agent for eight Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) candidates at the 2016 council elections in Derby.

Chris was found guilty on 12 out of 14 counts of misleading voters into signing TUSC candidates' nomination papers.

The case made by the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) was that a significant number of electors had signed believing that they were backing a petition against the closure

of Derby's Moorways swimming pool.

TUSC national election agent Clive Heemskerk said, "While recognising the jury's verdict, it is important that there is no question of actual votes being fraudulently cast.

"It is impossible not to draw the contrast between the CPS's approach to this case and that of the Conservative Party's 'Battle Bus' 2015 general election expenses scandal."

● Write to Chris Fernandez (21-12-1957), A5447ED, B wing, HMP Nottingham, 112 Perry Road, Sherwood, Nottingham NG5 3AG. The envelope should include your name and address on the back

USDAW

## Left wins president, now stack up more resistance

TESCO WORKER and Socialist Party member Amy Murphy has been elected president of the shop workers' union Usdaw.

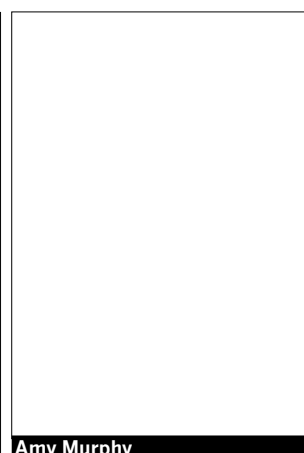
She won after campaigning for Usdaw to have a more militant and democratic leadership and policies such as a £10 an hour minimum wage.

Murphy said, "The time has come to stand up to the companies we work for.

"As president I will continue to challenge the union leadership and the bosses and be 100 percent behind the members."

Richie Venton, long-time political activist and founding member of the Scottish Socialist Party, was elected to the Usdaw national executive committee.

He said, "This was a vote for change—within our union and



Amy Murphy

throughout society. There'll be no backsliding on these aims on my part."

These electoral victories must be translated into struggle.



# Handcuffed on a burning bus

by TOMÁŠ TENGELY-EVANS

**SECURITY GUARDS refused to let refugees facing deportation leave a burning bus until they were handcuffed.**

And they initially wouldn't let them move further than 20 feet from the flames before the vehicle exploded on Wednesday 14 February.

This is just one glimpse of the brutality of Tories' racist immigration laws, which lock out refugees trying to get into Britain and criminalise those who come here.

The ten asylum seekers were being transported from Harmondsworth immigration detention centre in west London, the largest prison for refugees in Europe.

The bus caught fire on the M25 motorway on its way to a Pakistan-bound flight from Stansted Airport.

## Outsourced

Four asylum seekers spoke to the Guardian newspaper about their treatment at the hands of the outsourced Capita security guards.

Ali said, "They were handcuffing the detainees instead



A PASSERBY took a picture of the burning bus asylum seekers were detained on

of leading us to safety. I feared for the lives of all the people on board."

A Capita spokesperson claimed it was "factually inaccurate that when the fire was identified the individuals were then handcuffed".

Ali also said that the guards knew about an oil leak when the bus arrived

at Harmondsworth. "Three different officers have told me that oil was leaking from the back of the bus and there was a puddle of oil on the ground," he said.

"They told me that managers at Harmondsworth knew about it and they should have stopped us from getting on that bus."

At Yarl's Wood immigration detention centre prisoners begun an all-out hunger strike this Monday, according to the Detained Voices website. They had been on partial hunger strike for a number of weeks.

Labour's shadow home secretary Diane Abbott and shadow attorney

general Shami Chakrabarti visited Yarl's Wood last week. Abbott slammed the "shocking treatment" of detainees and said Labour would end indefinite detention for people awaiting deportation.

## Deportations

Anti-racists should demand that any incoming Labour government will stop all deportations and shut down the detention centres. It should grant asylum seekers indefinite leave to remain and open the border for refugees in Calais.

Resisting the Tories' racist assault also has to mean defending freedom of movement—and fighting to extend it to people beyond Europe's borders.

A key part of that is making sure there's the biggest possible turnout on the Stand Up To Racism (SUTR) demonstrations in London, Glasgow and Cardiff on 17 March.

Go to **Students Against Racism** conference, **page 12** and **standuptoracism.org.uk** for a list of rallies building for 17 March demonstrations

## Austria's fascists have had their 'democratic mask' ripped off

by DAVID ALBRICH

THE NEW Austrian government of the Tories and the Freedom Party suffers from "Trumpism"—every new move they make is met by resistance and opposition.

The anti-fascist movement has destroyed the democratic mask of the Euro-fascist Freedom Party.

On 13 January 70,000 marched against Nazis in government.

Just before the International Holocaust

Remembrance day a Nazi song book of the right wing student society "Germania" was revealed. Its texts glorified the Holocaust.

"Step on the gas, you ancient Germanic peoples, we'll manage the seventh million," goes the song.

The vice chairman of Germania was a leading candidate for the Freedom Party in a local election. He had to resign—now we want to bring down the whole government.

Since then the Freedom Party has been under



An anti-racist march in Austria

constant attack. Last week it was revealed that another student society sang the same antisemitic song.

Its chair is a close associate of the former Freedom Party

presidential candidate Norbert Hofer, who lost the election in 2016 and is now transport minister.

The 17 March mobilisation will be the biggest in Austria since we joined the international protests in 2016.

A broad coalition has been built for the demonstration.

It's 80 years since the "Anschluss"—the annexation of Austria into Nazi Germany.

David Albrich is a leading member of Linkswende jetzt (Left Turn Now). He is also a coordinator of Plattform für eine menschliche Asylpolitik (Platform for a humane asylum policy)

**"We're marching against racism on 17 March..."**

Plattform für eine menschliche Asylpolitik in Austria

Fluchtlinge Willkommen!

## FRANCE

## Strikes to stop racist policies

FRENCH president Emmanuel Macron, sometimes hailed as the answer to "extreme" right forces, is trying to push through racist legislation that would make it easier to deport refugees.

Macron's proposed law would double the 45 days refugees without documents can be kept in detention, among other measures.

Former banker Macron is bowing to pressure to move to the right on immigration



Ofpra workers on strike

from Marine Le Pen's fascist Front National. He beat Le Pen in the French presidential election last April.

Yet Macron faces some resistance to his latest racist attack.

Workers at the Office for the Protection of Refugees and Stateless People, known as Ofpra, struck against the move last Tuesday.

Ofpra is a public body set up after the 1951 Geneva Convention on refugees.

The CGT union federation members said Macron's plan was "an unequivocal departure from France's tradition of asylum".

And French anti-racists are also planning to join the 17 March day of demonstrations.

The experience of Macron shows that propping up the liberal centre is no way to defeat the forces of racism and fascism.



Emmanuel Macron